

Information Paper

2001 Census of Population and Housing

ABS Views on Content and Procedures

2001 Census of Population and Housing SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND AUTHORISATION

BEFORE COMPLETING A SUBMISSION PLEASE READ:

- ◆ 2001 Census of Population and Housing: ABS Views on Content and Procedures (Cat. No. 2007.0)
- ◆ Background for Submissions on 2001 Census of Population and Housing

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Please complete your submission and return it to Judy Aitkin, Population Census Development, W4Gb, Australian Bureau of Statistics, PO Box 10, BELCONNEN ACT 2616 by 30 April 1998.

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If you have problems in completing a submission, please contact the local office of ABS on the telephone number given in Appendix 5 of Cat. No. 2007.0.

Person who should be contacted if any queries arise regarding this submission:

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DISAGREE

Name	
Date	
Designation	
Organisation	
Address	- - - - -

Information Paper

2001 Census of Population and Housing

ABS Views on Content and Procedures

W. McLennan
Australian Statistician

AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS

EMBARGO: 11.30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) TUE 10 MAR 1998

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- For information about other ABS statistics and services, please refer to the back of this publication.
- For further information please contact Judy Aitkin on Canberra (02) 6252 7542.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this document is to initiate public consultation regarding the nature and content of the 2001 Census. The *Census and Statistics Act 1905* requires that the "... census shall be taken in the year 1981 and in every fifth year thereafter, ...". The ABS is preparing now to undertake the next census on Tuesday 7 August 2001.

The census is the largest statistical collection undertaken by the ABS and one of the most important. There are two broad objectives that underpin the census. First, to accurately measure the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on census night and the dwellings in which they live. Second, to provide timely, high quality and relevant data for small geographic areas and small population groups, to complement the rich but broad level data provided by ABS surveys.

This publication describes the proposed procedures for the 2001 Census and the topics that might be included. I invite users of census data and others to comment on any aspect of the conduct and content of the census, using the Submission Guidelines & Authorisation document included with this publication. Submissions are sought by 30 April 1998.

The 2001 Census coincides with the centenary of the Australian Federation and a new millennium. These are events of great historical significance and the results from the census will be a valuable national resource.

Further publications will seek views about other aspects of the census, including the output strategy, and the classifications, products and services to be produced.

W. McLennan
Australian Statistician

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
ASAC	Australian Statistics Advisory Council
CD	Collection District
OCR	Optical Character Recognition
AC	Automatic Coding
CAC	Computer Assisted Coding
ATSIC	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission
ASCO	Australian Standard Classification of Occupations
ASIC	Australian Standard Industrial Classification
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
ABSCQ	ABS Classification of Qualifications
UNSD	United Nations Statistical Division

CHAPTER 1

CONSULTATION AND ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Developing, designing and conducting a national census is a large task that spans about seven years. There are many points at which the ABS seeks the views of census data users and the community generally. This publication is the first in a series in which ABS will publish its views and seek comments in the lead up to the 2001 Census.

The purpose of *2001 Census: ABS Views on Content and Procedures* is to begin public consultation about the content and procedures of the 2001 Census.

The ABS will hold discussions with groups of users in all States and Territories during April 1998. The outcome of the process will be discussed with the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC) in July 1998. All people or organisations who have made submissions will be advised of the results of these deliberations. The ABS plans to make a submission to the Government, in early 1999, on the nature and content of the 2001 Census.

As the census development continues, ABS will be consulting about other aspects, including the output strategy, classifications to be used in output, and the details of the 2001 Census products and services. This will commence with an evaluation of the 1996 Census products and services in the second half of 1998 and continue with the other phases through to 2000.

OVERVIEW OF THIS PUBLICATION

This document outlines ABS plans for the 2001 Census, in the areas of privacy and confidentiality, collection operations, processing and output of results.

Chapter 6 sets out those topics that the ABS considers should be included in the next census, based on previous census consultations and demand for output.

Chapter 7 contains a group of topics which the ABS either wishes to inform users of current developments or seeks further information. For some cases, ABS is aware of emerging demand and is seeking to confirm the justification for including them in the census. In other cases, the ABS has yet to establish that the census is the best way to collect the data.

Chapter 8 lists topics that have been raised as possible census topics in the past but which the ABS considers should not be included in the 2001 Census. The reasons for this view are provided.

KEY GOALS FOR THE 2001 CENSUS

The ABS has a number of key goals for the 2001 Census. These are:

- reduce the time between taking the census and the dissemination of results compared with the 1996 Census, and ensure that results are released on the designated date, while maintaining the same high level of data accuracy;
- ensure the relevance of the data collected to both users and providers, whilst maintaining provider load to a level similar to 1996;
- improve census privacy and public perception of privacy;
- improve the operational effectiveness of field systems; and
- reduce the real cost per capita of the census.

A SUMMARY OF THE ISSUES ON WHICH THE ABS IS SEEKING ADVICE

While comment is welcome on any aspect of the 2001 Census, the main issues on which ABS is seeking advice are as follows:

- whether those topics set out in Chapter 7 should be included or excluded;
- whether there are any other topics which should be included in the 2001 Census and, if so, which topic(s) should be deleted to maintain provider load at about the 1996 Census level; and
- the arrangements for confidentiality and privacy.

HOW TO COMMENT ON ABS VIEWS

Anyone wishing to make a submission should refer to Appendices 1 and 2 or the Submission Guidelines and Authorisation which are enclosed with this publication.

State Government users should forward their submissions to the relevant statistical co-ordinating body, or, in the case of NSW, to the ABS Regional Office. Anyone wishing to make a submission should refer to Appendices 1 and 2 or the Submission Guidelines and Authorisation which are enclosed with this publication.

Submissions may be lodged electronically. An electronic form is available from the ABS website at <http://www.abs.gov.au> or can be requested by e-mailing census2001@abs.gov.au. Completed submissions should be returned to the e-mail address census2001@abs.gov.au.

People making submissions in hardcopy should forward them to Judy Aitkin, Population Census Development, Australian Bureau of Statistics, PO Box 10, Belconnen, ACT, 2616.

CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSIONS

The closing date for submissions is 30 April 1998.

CHAPTER 2

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

GENERAL ISSUES

The census collects information relating to each person and household in the country but it is not concerned with information about individuals as such. The census is taken to provide information about the community as a whole and about groups within the community. The public expects that the information they provide will be kept confidential and this protection is given by provisions in the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*.

The ABS also has an obligation to comply with the Information Privacy Principles set out in the *Privacy Act 1988*.

To ensure that confidentiality and privacy provisions are observed a comprehensive set of practices will be adopted by the ABS. In the 2001 Census they will include the following:

- (a) Temporary staff recruited for collection and processing of the census as well as permanent staff having access to completed census forms are officers of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. All ABS officers will be legally bound to secrecy under the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*. Officers sign an undertaking of fidelity and secrecy to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities about census data. Section 19 of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* forbids past or present ABS officers from divulging information collected under this Act, either directly or indirectly, under penalty of a fine of up to \$5,000 or imprisonment for a period not exceeding two years, or both.
- (b) In large urban areas procedures will be established to avoid collectors working in the districts in which they live, to minimise the possibility of collecting information from people they know personally. However, in other areas, where fewer applications are expected for census collector positions and travel involves significant costs, it is more likely collectors will be recruited who might know some householders. If a collector does know a householder they will be instructed to offer the householder an envelope in which to seal the completed form.
- (c) Householders will be advised that anyone who does not want their completed form to be seen by the collector will be able to obtain from the collector an envelope in which to seal the form. In addition, any individual member of a household (including a visitor) can request a separate form and envelope in which to record their own details. Census collectors will be required to pass all envelopes unopened to their field supervisor who will then conduct quality assurance. People not in private dwellings generally receive separate forms and envelopes. People who are not satisfied with these arrangements will be able to send a completed form to the ABS by mail.

- (d) A booklet explaining the reasons for including each topic in the census will be delivered to each household along with the census form.
- (e) Census collectors will be instructed to pick up census forms in person from householders and not to suggest arrangements whereby completed forms are left outside the house at some pre-arranged location.
- (f) Completed census forms will be transferred from the field to the census processing centre under secure arrangements. Full-time security personnel will be employed to prevent any unauthorised access to the processing centre.
- (g) Strong security arrangements are implemented on the ABS computer system which include the use of regularly changed passwords, access control and audit trails.
- (h) In accordance with the *Census and Statistics Act 1905*, no results will be released in a way which would enable particular individuals or households to be identified. In past censuses, the ABS has made slight random adjustments to the tabulated data. Similar or enhanced procedures will be employed in the 2001 Census.

DESTRUCTION OF CENSUS FORMS

In past Australian censuses, as a matter of Government policy, forms have been destroyed once the statistical data required for the purposes of the census have been extracted. ABS is strongly of the view that this practice should continue.

Users would be aware that in May 1997 the issue of the treatment of future census forms was referred by the Treasurer to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. The Committee is undertaking an inquiry during which it has received submissions from individuals and organisations and heard evidence at public hearings. The inquiry is still continuing at the time of preparing this publication. The Committee report will be presented to the Government for consideration.

Therefore, the ABS is not seeking views about retention of census forms. However, ABS will advise users of the outcome of the inquiry and of any consequences for privacy and confidentiality arrangements.

CHAPTER 3

COLLECTION OPERATIONS

OBJECTIVES

The objective of the collection operation is to achieve a high quality census count that obtains maximum coverage of the population in a cost-effective manner. This involves the recruitment, training, supervision and payment associated with a temporary workforce of some 44,000 people. It also includes the logistics associated with designing and preparing maps and the printing, packing, distribution and return of over 1,700 tonnes of material.

CENSUS DATE

The 1991 and 1996 Censuses were both held on 6 August.

Prior to 1991, late June was the traditional census date. The early August date was selected to avoid a clash with school holiday periods. If the census is scheduled close to the holidays then operational difficulties increase and data quality declines due to people being absent from their usual residences.

It is the ABS view that the 2001 Census should be held on Tuesday, 7 August 2001.

SCOPE

The scope of the census is all people in Australia on census night, but foreign diplomats and their families are excluded. Visitors to Australia are counted regardless of how long they have been in the country or how long they plan to stay. Australian residents out of the country on census night are out of the scope of the census.

People outside Australia who are not required to undertake migration formalities, such as those on oil and gas rigs off the Australian coast, are included.

People will be counted where they are on census night. This means that the census will be conducted on an actual location or place of enumeration basis (often referred to as a defacto census).

MAPPING

Each collector will be responsible for the taking of the census in a clearly bounded local area, known as a Collection District (CD). There will be about 36,000 CDs covering Australia without overlap or omission. The design and mapping of these areas is a most important preliminary to the census as they represent both the basic unit of collection and the building block for aggregation into broader level spatial units for output purposes. While some change is necessary, CDs are, as far as possible, designed in such a way as to allow comparison of information over time. For the 2001 Census, the ABS intends to align CDs in urban areas to gazetted suburb boundaries where they exist. The outer boundaries of

these CDs will remain fixed over time and changes to match other administrative boundaries (e.g. local government) will be accommodated by splitting these CDs.

For the 2001 Census, the ABS will use a computer-based mapping system similar to that used for the 1996 Census. The main benefits of this system are a common map base for both collection and dissemination purposes, more detailed and appropriately scaled maps for use by collectors leading to better coverage, and increased ABS control over the design of CDs and dissemination products.

PUBLIC AWARENESS AND ASSISTANCE

Public co-operation and acceptance of the census is essential for production of high quality statistics. For this reason a public awareness campaign will be conducted prior to and during the census. The aims of the campaign will be to maintain high quality response to the census by informing the public of the usefulness of the statistics obtained and the confidentiality of the information provided. The availability of help for those who may, for language or other reasons, have difficulty in completing the form will also be made known.

A redesigned information booklet will be delivered with the census form to each household. The new booklet will be more readable, to better explain the census aims and provide a question and answer part for commonly asked questions. The collector will also answer any queries and arrange for collection of the completed census form.

A telephone hotline will be available to answer questions. In addition, there will be a telephone interpreter service to assist people who have English language problems.

DELIVERY AND COLLECTION OF CENSUS FORMS

Most of the temporary field staff recruited will be group leaders and collectors. A group leader will be responsible for about 11 collectors who will each be responsible for the delivery and collection of census forms from an average of about 200 dwellings. However, the number of dwellings covered varies depending on whether the area is urban or rural. In addition, special collectors will be recruited to undertake census duties in large non-private dwellings (such as hospitals, hotels and gaols) and caravan parks.

The census will be conducted by a collector drop off/pick up method. That is, census collectors will deliver forms to each dwelling before census day and then return and pick up the forms after census day. Mail back may be used for areas where delivery and collection of census forms has proven difficult in the past.

ENUMERATION OF
INDIGENOUS, HOMELESS
AND ETHNIC PEOPLE

Special procedures will be implemented to ensure that the coverage of Indigenous, homeless and ethnic people is as complete as possible. These procedures will be further developed from those used successfully for the 1996 Census.

NON CO-OPERATION

It is expected that the public awareness campaign on the nature of the census, the assurances on confidentiality and the uses of the resulting statistics will keep problems of non co-operation to a minimum. People who do not co-operate with the collector will usually be approached by the group leader in an endeavour to overcome problems or objections. If necessary, this approach will be followed up by a letter from the ABS explaining the purposes and value of the census and its legal status, and seeking the householder's co-operation. Further action, including legal action, will generally be considered only after these measures have failed.

CHAPTER 4

PROCESSING

A key goal for the 2001 Census is to improve further the timeliness of the release of results. One approach being investigated to achieve this goal relates to the method used to capture and process census data. For the 2001 Census data the ABS is considering the use of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) equipment to capture the data from census forms together with the use of automatic coding (AC) and computer assisted coding (CAC) in the processing phase.

PROCESSING OUTLINE

A Data Processing Centre (DPC) will be established to undertake the processing of the 2001 Census. If OCR data capture is adopted, processing will proceed as follows:

Receipt and register of forms: a check will be undertaken to ensure that all completed census forms have been received at the DPC.

Data capture: the forms will be scanned by an OCR machine. A reconciliation process will ensure that all forms have been data captured. Automatic coding will be undertaken, followed by either data repair or computer assisted coding for those responses which cannot be automatically coded.

Some editing will be undertaken to reduce the inconsistencies in census data. The kinds of error which editing procedures can detect are limited to responses and/or codes which are invalid, which are inconsistent with other responses on the census form or which are in conflict with census definitions. Some inconsistencies will remain in the data where it is not possible to determine the true situation from the information on the census form.

Data for missing values for sex, age, marital status and state of usual residence will be imputed.

Quality assurance processes will be implemented at the DPC to maximise the accurate and consistent recording of information from the census form.

If OCR data capture is not adopted, the ABS will revert to Optical Mark Recognition technology and the associated processes which were used for the 1991 and 1996 Censuses.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS/OUTPUT

WHERE PEOPLE ARE COUNTED

The 2001 Census will be conducted on an actual location basis with adequate provision for a range of usual residence based data.

CLASSIFICATIONS

Most classifications to be used in the 2001 Census will be similar to those used in the 1996 Census. At this stage the ABS expects to use an upgraded classification of qualifications. Comment will be sought during 1999 on classifications. Users wishing to be consulted on the classifications should advise the relevant contact officer listed in Appendix 5.

DATA RELEASE

2001 Census data will be released in two stages and at least as quickly as it was for the 1996 Census. The first release will consist of the demographic, social and housing variables and the second release will consist of the internal migration, family and labour force related variables.

INVESTIGATIONS OF OUTPUT PRODUCTS

The ABS intends to undertake a review of output products and services from the 1996 Census as part of an overall review of that census. This will serve as an input to the development of output plans for the 2001 Census. At a later phase, clients will be consulted and will have the opportunity to suggest new products from the 2001 Census.

Other investigative work includes:

- methods of electronic dissemination;
- ways of including other ABS data in standard products; and
- output mapping needs for the 2001 Census.

EVALUATION

An integral step in the conduct of the census is an evaluation aimed at providing a measure of the extent of underenumeration. For this purpose a post enumeration survey will be conducted soon after census night. Further detailed evaluation studies will be conducted to assist users of census data with information about data quality and to provide feedback for improvements to be made for the following census.

CHAPTER 6

TOPICS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE 2001 CENSUS

TOPICS INCLUDED

The criteria used for assessing census topics are set out and explained in Appendix 1. In summary the criteria are as follows:

- 1 the topic is of major national importance;
- 2 there is a need for data on the topic for small groups in the population or for small geographic areas; and
- 3 the topic is suitable for inclusion in the census.

This chapter contains assessments of the following topics which ABS considers should be included in the 2001 census. These topics are included on the basis of continued demand for output for small areas and for small population groups or are required to assist in collection and processing operations.

Address on census night
Name
Sex and age
Family relationship
Registered marital status
Usual residence at census time
Internal migration
Religion
Birthplace
Year of arrival
Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander origin
Main language spoken at home/Proficiency in spoken English
Attendance at an educational institution
Education qualifications
Age left school
Income (including family and household income)
Labour force status
Occupation
Industry
Hours worked
Journey to work (destination zone coding)
Mode of travel to work
Number of motor vehicles garaged
Number of bedrooms
Type of tenure (nature of occupancy)
Housing loan repayments
Rent
Structure of private dwelling (classification)
Location of private dwelling (classification)
Non-private dwelling (classification)

ADDRESS ON CENSUS NIGHT

ASSESSMENT

Household address on census night is essential for the conduct of an accurate and high quality census.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Confidentiality of the information provided is carefully guarded. *The Census and Statistics Act 1905* requires that no identifiable information about an individual be made available to any other person, government agency or private organisation.

In past censuses actual addresses were not stored on computer files and census forms were destroyed after processing of the data was completed. ABS is strongly of the view that these practices should continue for the 2001 Census and for future censuses. However, the future treatment of census forms is currently the subject of an inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. The Committee report will be presented to the Government for consideration.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Census counts of where people spent census night, classified by statistical areas, are available from every national census.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

1 At what address did this household spend Census Night, Tuesday, 6 August 1996?

Street number and name

.....

Suburb, rural locality or town

.....

State/Territory

Postcode

.....

JUSTIFICATION

The majority of census output is available on a place of enumeration basis (i.e. where people spent census night) for individual collection districts or aggregations of them. These aggregations include Local Government Areas and (CD derived) Postcodes. Household address on census night is used to confirm the geographic code allocated to the household.

Household address is essential for the conduct of a high quality post-enumeration survey which is used to measure the level of underenumeration in the census. These measures are an important

component in the estimation of resident population for each of the States, Territories and Local Government areas as required by the *States Grants (General Purposes) Act 1994* and the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* and for determining the number of seats allocated to each State and Territory in the House of Representatives.

Household address is the best way for collectors to ensure that all forms they deliver and collect are accounted for.

NAME

ASSESSMENT

Names are regarded as essential for the conduct of an accurate census and the ABS view is to include name.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The inclusion of names in the census does raise privacy concerns even though the confidentiality of data provided is carefully guarded. *The Census and Statistics Act 1905* requires that no identifiable information about an individual be made available to any other person, government agency or private organisation.

In past censuses names were not stored on computer files and census forms were destroyed after processing of the data was completed. ABS is strongly of the view that these practices should continue for the 2001 Census and for future censuses. However, the future treatment of census forms is currently the subject of an inquiry by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. The Committee report will be presented to the Government for consideration.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Names have been requested in all previous censuses.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

2 Name of each person *including visitors* who spent the night of Tuesday, 6 August, 1996 in this household:

- Record details for all adults, children, babies and *visitors*.
- Include any person who returned Wednesday, 7 August 1996, without having been counted elsewhere.

First or given name

.....

Surname or family name

.....

JUSTIFICATION

Names are essential for the conduct of a high quality post-enumeration survey which is used to measure the level of underenumeration in the census. These measures are an important component in the estimation of resident populations for each of the States, Territories and Local Government Areas as required by the *States Grants (General Purposes) Act 1994* and the *Local Government (Financial Assistance) Act 1995* and for determining the number of seats allocated to each State and Territory in the House of Representatives.

Names are used with other information to help determine, for coding purposes, the composition of households, especially where households consist of more than one family. They are also used by collectors to help

ensure all forms are accounted for or where they need to refer back to individuals within households.

Including names on census forms reduces the incidence of non-completion and inaccurate responses. The Australian Law Reform Commission, in its 1979 report on Privacy and the Census, found that an anonymous census would result in an unacceptable level of non-response and an equally unacceptable bias in responses.

SEX AND AGE

ASSESSMENT

The topics sex and age are essential items for the production of accurate State population estimates, a major objective of the census, and for sub-State population estimates. They are valuable items in their own right for planning and policy development and information on sex and age are essential for virtually all demographic studies.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The topics of sex and age have been included in every Australian census since 1911.

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

3 Is the person male or female?	() Male
• Mark one box for each person, for example (-)	() Female

4 Mark the person's age last birthday.	
• If age is less than one year, mark box (0) as (θ).	
• Mark one box for each person. For example, for a person aged 19 years:	

Years	Years
(0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)	(0) (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8)
(9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17)	(9) (10) (11) (12) (13) (14) (15) (16) (17)
(18) (19) (20) (21) (22) (23) (24) (25) (26)	(18) (19) (20) (21) (22) (23) (24) (25) (26)
(27) (28) (29) (30) (31) (32) (33) (34) (35)	(27) (28) (29) (30) (31) (32) (33) (34) (35)
(36) (37) (38) (39) (40) (41) (42) (43) (44)	(36) (37) (38) (39) (40) (41) (42) (43) (44)
(45) (46) EXAMPLE (51) (52) (53)	(45) (46) (47) (48) (49) (50) (51) (52) (53)
(54) (55) (56) (57) (58) (59) (60) (61) (62)	(54) (55) (56) (57) (58) (59) (60) (61) (62)
(63) (64) (65) (66) (67) (68) (69) (70) (71)	(63) (64) (65) (66) (67) (68) (69) (70) (71)
(72) (73) (74) (75) (76) (77) (78) (79) (80)	(72) (73) (74) (75) (76) (77) (78) (79) (80)
(81) (82) (83) (84) (85) (86) (87) (88) (89)	(81) (82) (83) (84) (85) (86) (87) (88) (89)
(90) (91) (92) (93) (94) (95) (96) (97) (98)	(90) (91) (92) (93) (94) (95) (96) (97) (98)
() 99 years or more	() 99 years or more – please specify.....years

For the 1996 Census, the age grid was changed so that the numbers ran horizontally rather than down the grid, as this pattern seemed more familiar to respondents. Also, extra numbers were added, so that people up to and including 98 years of age could mark their answer on the grid.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Sex and age counts are essential for the production of accurate population estimates. Users require counts by single year of age and sex for small geographic areas and small groups of the population as a basic input to many planning and policy development activities. The sex and

age variables are also widely used with other characteristics of the population in cross-classified tables.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

If OCR is adopted for the 2001 Census, the Age question may be altered so that respondents write in either their age or their date of birth, rather than marking a grid. This would be simpler for respondents to complete. However any change from the 1996 Census format will be subject to satisfactory testing of the revised age/date of birth question.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

ASSESSMENT

Information on relationships between people in a household is used to identify the variety of household and family groups within households. Data about households and families are of considerable value in their own right and are even more valuable when cross-classified with other variables. Detailed data are available only from the census and provide a benchmark for the analysis of changing family structures and characteristics over time.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on relationship has been included in all Australian censuses. In 1996 for the first time, family coding was undertaken for people living in self-contained units in retirement villages and manufactured home estates.

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

People staying in non-private dwellings on census night were asked only to mark whether hotel guest, patient, staff member etc. Those staying in private dwellings were asked the following questions. (No response was required for Person 1).

5	What is the person's relationship to Person 1/Person 2?	Person 2	Person 3
		<input type="checkbox"/> Husband or wife of Person 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Child of both Person 1 and Person 2
		<input type="checkbox"/> De facto partner of Person 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Child of Person 1 only
	• Examples of other relationships:	<input type="checkbox"/> Child of Person 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Child of Person 2 only
	son-in-law, granddaughter, uncle, boarder.	<input type="checkbox"/> Stepchild of Person 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister of Person 1
		<input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister of Person 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant of Person 1
		<input type="checkbox"/> Unrelated flatmate or co-tenant of Person 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Other relationship to Person 1 - please specify
		<input type="checkbox"/> Other relationship to Person 1 - please specify

41 Are there any persons who usually live in this household who were absent on the night of Tuesday, 6 August 1996?

() No > Go to 42

() Yes > Please complete one separate column for each person absent

Name of each person who usually lives in this household but was not here on the night of Tuesday, 6 August 1996.

First or given name

.....

Surname or family name

.....

Is the person male or female?

() Male

• Mark one box for each person absent.

() Female

Age last birthday.*

() 0–14 years

() 15–24 years

() 25 years or more

Is the person a full time student?*

() No

() Yes, full-time student

() Yes, part-time student

What is the person's relationship* to Person 1/Person 2?

• Examples of other relationships:
son-in-law, granddaughter,
uncle, boarder.

() Husband or wife of Person 1

() De facto partner of Person 1

() Child of both Person 1 & 2

() Child of Person 1 only

() Child of Person 2 only

() Unrelated flatmate or
co-tenant of Person 1

() Other relationship to Person 1
- please specify

.....

* See relevant topics for details

USER REQUIREMENTS

Questions on this topic allow the identification of different types of households and the structure of family groups within each household. Information relating to families and households are required at small area level and over time at this level for the development, implementation and monitoring of many social and economic policies.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Data on family structure are available from some ABS household surveys. However, because of restricted sample sizes, surveys do not provide reliable data for small areas and small groups of the population.

REGISTERED MARITAL STATUS

ASSESSMENT

Registered marital status is a key social and demographic indicator.

Information from this topic is used by the ABS to maintain the accuracy of the estimated resident population by marital status. This series is the benchmark for the calculation of a range of rates and ratios used in socio-economic studies.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on marital status has been included in all previous censuses.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

6 What is the person's present marital status?	<input type="checkbox"/> Never married
	<input type="checkbox"/> Widowed
	<input type="checkbox"/> Divorced
	<input type="checkbox"/> Separated but not divorced
	<input type="checkbox"/> Married

USER REQUIREMENTS

Registered marital status data are used by demographers for population analysis. The data are also used more generally in association with information about actual living arrangements (social marital status) for a range of social research purposes.

Before the 1996 Census, consideration was given to discontinuing the collection of registered marital status data, as social marital status data were also collected in the census from the responses given to the Family Relationship question. However, consultations revealed that strong user demand continued for registered marital status.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

It is proposed to change the 'separated but not divorced' category to 'separated' subject to testing revealing no significant adverse effects.

USUAL RESIDENCE AT CENSUS TIME

ASSESSMENT

Information on usual residence is essential to the production of accurate State, Territory and local government population estimates, a primary objective of the census.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on a person's place of usual residence at census time was first included in the 1961 Census when people who were temporarily absent from their usual residence were asked to name their State or Territory of usual residence (or overseas if appropriate). The topic was not included in 1966 but has been included in all censuses since 1971.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

7 What is the person's usual address?	<input type="checkbox"/> The address shown on the front of this form
• 'Usual' address is that address at which the person has lived or intends to live for a total of 6 months or more in 1996.	<input type="checkbox"/> Elsewhere in Australia - please specify address
• For persons who now have no usual address, write 'no usual address'.	Street number and name
• For boarders at boarding school or college, give address at boarding school or college.	Suburb, rural locality or town
	State/Territory Postcode
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other country

The instruction for people with no usual address was modified in an attempt to better identify homeless people staying in dwellings on census night.

USER REQUIREMENTS

The most important use for data on place of usual residence at census time is to provide usual residence census counts for the estimation of usual resident populations for States, Territories and Local Government Areas. These population estimates are used in determining the number of seats in the House of Representatives allocated to each State and Territory, and the distribution of funds to the States, Territories and Local Government Authorities.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Many ABS surveys include questions on usual residence of members of the household but small sample sizes do not enable generation of data of sufficient accuracy to use in compiling resident population estimates for local government areas.

INTERNAL MIGRATION

ASSESSMENT

Information on usual residence one year ago and five years ago is used in the postcensal estimation of interstate migration, which in turn is used for calculating Estimated Resident Population.

The census is the only source of data on usual residence one and five years ago.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since 1971 people have been asked to provide the full address of their usual residence five years ago. A question on usual residence one year ago has been included since 1976. In 1991, respondents were asked only for their State of usual residence one year ago and for their full address five years ago. The 1996 Census asked for full address of usual residence for both one year ago and five years ago.

Only a Statistical Local Area code, not the actual address, is stored on the computer files.

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

USER REQUIREMENTS

Data on a person's usual residence at some prior point in time (e.g. one or five years ago), when combined with detailed responses to the question on usual residence at census time, provide information on the extent of internal migration of the population. Coupled with other census topics, the questions on usual residence provide information on characteristics of the migratory population as well as the non-migratory population. Such data are used in the production of intercensal and postcensal population estimates, all of which are compiled on the basis of usual residence. In addition, as internal migration is a major component of population change for many areas the data are important in the calculation of population forecasts.

Information on the internal migration patterns of the population at national, state, regional, local government and collection district levels is required for many planning purposes. In particular the data are used in:

- forecasting short and medium term housing requirements;
- planning transport, health and educational services; and
- zoning, release and development of land for residential and commercial purposes.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Some administrative by-product data, such as change of address information from Medicare, give regular statistics on the number of movements, but only very limited details are available on the characteristics of movers. Such data are also subject to changes in their coverage.

RELIGION

ASSESSMENT

Information on Religion is widely used in the religious community, and by Government agencies which provide services that complement services provided by religious organisations.

Religious organisations are the largest providers of services to the community outside those provided by Governments, and the census is the only source of data they can use for the effective and efficient planning of such services.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on a person's religion has been asked in all Australian censuses. *The Census and Statistics Act 1905* specifies that response to this question is optional. Despite the optional nature of the Religion question approximately 90% of respondents provide an answer.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

10 What is the person's religious denomination?	<input type="checkbox"/> Catholic
• Answering this question is OPTIONAL.	<input type="checkbox"/> Anglican (Church of England)
• If no religion, mark last box.	<input type="checkbox"/> Uniting Church
	<input type="checkbox"/> Presbyterian
	<input type="checkbox"/> Greek Orthodox
	<input type="checkbox"/> Baptist
	<input type="checkbox"/> Lutheran
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other - please specify

	<input type="checkbox"/> No religion

The list of response categories reflects those religions which are reported most often at the previous census.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Data on religious affiliations of the population are required for planning the extensive range of activities and services involving religious organisations, including:

- location of places of worship, education facilities, aged persons care and other social services;
- the allocation of chaplains to hospitals, prisons and the armed services;
- the accreditation of marriage celebrants; and

- allocation of Government grants to non-government schools and religious groups, sociological research and the allocation of air time on public radio.

Information on a person's religion is also, to some extent, useful as a surrogate measure of ethnicity.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Data on the religious affiliations of the population are not available from other sources, but some data on religion are obtained from marriage registrations in the form of files used by marriage celebrants.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

There has been some concern that the religions in the self-coded list on the 1996 Census form were all 'Christian' religions. However, only a small number of the most common response categories can be listed in the space available, and these are selected according to the frequency of responses in the previous census.

If OCR is used for 2001, all respondents may be asked to write in their religion.

Question design for the 2001 Census will take account of a new ABS standard currently being drafted for this variable. Testing of alternative questions will be undertaken as required.

BIRTHPLACE

ASSESSMENT

Most of the important uses of birthplace information require detailed data for the large number of source countries of Australian migrants. Such data are also required for small areas. These needs cannot be met with acceptable quality from sample surveys nor overseas arrivals and departures statistics. The value of the data is greatly enhanced when cross-classified with data on period of residence in Australia which enables recent migrants to be distinguished from those who arrived some time ago. The data are widely used in planning and policy development.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on a person's birthplace has been included in every Australian census. Before the 1981 Census, with the exception of the 1921 Census, respondents were asked to provide details of the State or Territory of birth if born in Australia, or country of birth if born overseas. In 1921 and in censuses since 1981, State or Territory details have not been required.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

12 In which country was the person born?	<input type="checkbox"/> Australia. > Go to ...
	<input type="checkbox"/> England
	<input type="checkbox"/> Scotland
	<input type="checkbox"/> Italy
	<input type="checkbox"/> Greece
	<input type="checkbox"/> New Zealand
	<input type="checkbox"/> Viet Nam
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other - please specify

The list of response categories for this question is designed to reflect those countries which are reported most often at the previous census. For the 1996 Census, Viet Nam replaced The Netherlands on the list of response categories.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Data on birthplace are critical in targeting settlement assistance to migrants. They are used for the examination of the need for, and the utilisation of, health, education and other social services for migrant groups, for labour force training and recruitment and for the formulation and monitoring of many other government policies and programs related to migrants. For these purposes the data is mostly required at a small area level and is often cross-classified with year of arrival data.

The inclusion of the birthplace topic in the census enables the ABS to maintain the accuracy of the estimated resident population by birthplace series.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

A question on birthplace is included in every ABS population survey, although detailed birthplace information is not available from these surveys because of high sampling error on estimates for small geographic areas and for many small birthplace groups.

Regular statistics on overseas arrivals and departures classified by birthplace are available from the processing of passenger cards required to be completed for each person arriving or departing Australia.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

If OCR is used for the 2001 Census, the birthplace question may only have two listed response categories - Australia and Other, and those marking the latter will be asked to write in their specific country of birth. This will be tested before being used.

YEAR OF ARRIVAL

ASSESSMENT

Year of arrival is used to analyse data on the overseas-born population. Survey data cannot provide the small area data needed, or the cross-classified tables on the many birthplace groups that are possible with census results.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on date of first arrival in Australia or number of completed years of residence in Australia, has been asked of overseas-born residents in all Australian censuses since 1911.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

13 In what year did the person first arrive in Australia to live here for one year or more?	<input type="checkbox"/> Before 1981
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1981–1985
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1986–1990
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1991
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1992
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1993
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1994
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1995
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1996
	<input type="checkbox"/> Will be here less than one year

The wording of the question for the 1996 Census was amended to reflect the new standard approach to this topic for all ABS surveys asking about the year of arrival in Australia for the overseas-born.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Data on year of arrival, when cross-classified with other census data, are used to analyse changes in the characteristics of migrants to Australia over time. In addition, users have identified the following needs for these data:

- for the separate identification of recent compared with 'older' migrant groups, with the former generally requiring more services; and
- for analysis of various aspects of migrant participation in the labour force.

The data are generally required at a small area level.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Most ABS population surveys collect information on year of arrival for the overseas-born population. Regular statistics on overseas arrivals are available from the processing of passenger cards required for each movement.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

If OCR is used for the 2001 Census, this question may ask overseas-born respondents to write in the actual year they arrived in Australia, thereby providing more detailed information than in recent censuses.

ABORIGINAL/TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ORIGIN

ASSESSMENT

The census is the only comprehensive source of socio-demographic data on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations for small areas.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In all censuses prior to 1971 respondents were asked to state their race and, where race was mixed, to specify the proportions of each. In the 1971 and 1976 Censuses a question with response categories of European, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and Other was included. Since 1981, a specific question has been asked to identify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. In remote areas, special interview forms have been used to facilitate the enumeration of these groups.

Special measures have also been adopted to obtain as complete a coverage as possible of the Indigenous population. These included special census awareness activities, greater use of Indigenous staff, greater involvement of Indigenous organisations, and better co-ordination of special field operations.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

14 Is the person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?	(<input type="checkbox"/>) No
	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Yes, Aboriginal
• For persons of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin, mark both 'yes' boxes.	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Yes, Torres Strait Islander

For the 1996 question, the instruction was altered so that respondents could indicate if they were of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

USER REQUIREMENTS

The main purpose of this topic is to determine the number and distribution of people of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.

Data on the distribution and characteristics of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander populations are important to Commonwealth and State authorities responsible for developing policies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in such fields as housing, health services, education, social security and special assistance programs. The Commonwealth Grants Commission requires accurate data on the Indigenous populations for use in the allocation of funds to the States and Territories for services directed at these populations. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) requires small area demographic data for use in the planning and administrative activities of ATSIC Regional Councils.

Users are keen to obtain stable Indigenous population figures which are comparable from one census to the next.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

There have been some improvements in recent years on the extent to which data on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are available from relevant Commonwealth and State government authorities. However, the available data are still limited in coverage and quality.

The ABS conducted an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey in 1994 which provided statistical data on a wide range of topics at National, State level and ATSIC Region.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

Some users have expressed a strong need for greater consistency in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from one census to the next. The ABS continues to be interested in efforts to find an approach to questioning and collecting this information which would produce more stable population counts and statistics.

If potentially suitable alternative question designs emerge they will be tested prior to the 2001 Census.

MAIN LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME/PROFICIENCY IN SPOKEN ENGLISH

ASSESSMENT

Language use questions have importance in implementation of national and State policies on language.

Users in all levels of Government and community groups require data on proficiency in English at small area level and for small groups for use in targeting both language services and welfare or community services aimed at migrants.

The Government's objectives in its access and equity policy require language use data to be available for monitoring and implementing associated programs.

Language, either alone or in combination with other characteristics, is also useful as a proxy for ethnicity.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A language question was first included in 1921, asking whether the person could read and write; in 1933 the question asked whether the person could read and write a foreign language if unable to read and write English. Language was not included again until 1976, when a question on languages regularly used was included.

In 1981, a question was asked on proficiency in spoken English for those persons speaking a language other than English at home. Since the 1986 Census, an additional question on main language spoken at home has been asked.

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

17 Does the person speak a language other than English <i>at home</i>?	(<input type="checkbox"/>) No, English only > Go to ...
• If more than one language, indicate the one that is spoken most often.	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Yes, Italian
	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Yes, Greek
	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Yes, Cantonese
	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Yes, Mandarin
	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Yes, Arabic
	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Yes, German
	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Yes, other - please specify
18 How well does the person speak English?	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Very well
	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Well
	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Not well
	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Not at all

Response categories included in the first question reflect the languages most commonly spoken at home, except for Mandarin. It has been

included to cover the two main Chinese dialects and to avoid distortion due to speakers of Mandarin opting for Cantonese in the belief that it is the only Chinese dialect available.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Data on languages used are required:

- for the investigation and development of language services such as interpretation/translation and education;
- for the implementation of the national language policy; and
- as an indicator of 'active' ethnicity.

Data on proficiency in English are needed for:

- the development of English teaching programs;
- the development of multilingual information programs;
- the provision of interpretation/translation services; and
- the provision of migrant welfare services.

Data on languages used and proficiency in English are required at small area level and for small population groups for the planning and delivery of the above services.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

A number of ABS surveys collect data on the main language spoken at home.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

If OCR is used for the 2001 Census, all respondents may be asked to write in their answer if the language they speak at home is not English. Testing of this option will be undertaken before it is adopted.

The ABS is currently conducting a survey of the major users and producers of language data to determine the language variables for which there is a genuine demand such as First Language Spoken, Main Language Spoken at Home, etc. The survey will also elicit information on the reasons particular variables are used. The results of that survey will be taken into account in deciding whether any change is required to the treatment of language in the census.

ATTENDANCE AT AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

ASSESSMENT

Information on whether a person is attending an educational institution has important uses for education and labour market planning. It is also used to identify dependent family children in family coding.

The census provides a wider range of information on the characteristics of students than is currently available from the statistics derived from administrative sources. This topic is considered to be of high priority by education planners at Commonwealth, State and community level. Significant changes are occurring in education participation and further changes are anticipated. Data from this question cross-classified with other characteristics will be very important in monitoring the changes as they occur.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A variety of questions enabling the identification of full-time students has been included in all censuses. Questions on type of educational institution being attended by students have also been asked in varying degrees of detail in a number of censuses, to enable comprehensive statistics to be produced on the characteristics of people attending various types of institutions.

Due to structural changes in the higher education system, some changes in terminology were made for the second question for 1996. Also, 'Catholic' and 'Other Non-Government' primary and secondary schools were separately identified.

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

19 Is the person attending a school or any other educational institution?	<input type="checkbox"/> No >Go to ...
• Include external or correspondence students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, full-time student
	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, part-time student

20 What type of educational institution is the person attending? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include external or correspondence students. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-school <input type="checkbox"/> Infants/Primary school <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Catholic <input type="checkbox"/> Other Non-Government <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary school <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Catholic <input type="checkbox"/> Other Non-Government <input type="checkbox"/> Tertiary institution <input type="checkbox"/> Technical or further educational institution (including TAFE Colleges) <input type="checkbox"/> University or other higher educational institution <input type="checkbox"/> Other educational institution
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USER REQUIREMENTS

Users require data on demographic, family, economic and social characteristics of people attending particular types of educational institutions.

Information on whether each person aged 15–20 years is a full-time student or not is used for identifying dependent family children in family coding.

The data enable education planners to compare the current participation levels of small groups in the population. They also assist in developing policies affecting the labour market.

Information on the relationship between education and labour market activities, of young people in particular, is required for Governments to monitor the impact of their policies and programs relating to people in the labour market. While much of this need is met by surveys, the census provides data for small areas and for small population groups which assists in planning the delivery of programs.

Data on type of institution being attended further enhance analysis by indicating the participation of different groups in the population in the various levels of education.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Data on attendance at schools, universities and technical or further educational institutions are collected each year from administrative sources but limited socio-economic data are available from these sources.

Monthly labour force surveys ask people whether or not they are attending school. Data on school and tertiary attendance for people aged 15–64 are also available from the annual ABS survey Transition from Education to Work.

EDUCATION QUALIFICATIONS

ASSESSMENT

Qualifications information from the census is used, in particular, to support planning and policy development in the areas of education, training and employment. This is an area of significant public debate.

Changes may be needed to ensure continued relevance of census qualifications data. This will depend on the outcome of a review mentioned below.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

An education question in which respondents reported their highest level of achievement was included in the 1911 Census. However, a question directly asking about education qualifications was not included until 1976 when respondents were asked to provide details of the qualification name and institution at which it was obtained. Since 1971, people aged 15 or over have been asked whether they had obtained a qualification. If so, information on the name of the highest qualification obtained, the field of study, the institution from which it was granted, and the year obtained was collected to enable the coding of the highest qualification to a detailed classification incorporating both level and field of study.

For 1996, minor changes were made to the wording of all the questions (the word 'obtained' was changed to 'completed'), and response categories were altered for the first question to enable more accurate collection of trade certificate/apprenticeship data.

Qualifications data in both the 1991 and 1996 Censuses were classified to the ABS Classification of Qualifications (ABSCQ).

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

23 Has the person <i>completed</i> a trade certificate or any other educational qualification since leaving school?	<p>() No >Go to ... () No, still studying for first qualification >Go to ... () Yes, trade certificate/apprenticeship () Yes, other qualification</p>
 24 What is the <i>highest</i> qualification the person has <i>completed</i> since leaving school?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For example, trade certificate, bachelor degree, associate diploma, doctorate.	
Full name of qualification	

25	What is the main field of study for the person's <i>highest qualification completed</i>?	Field of study
	• For example, history, plumbing, primary school teaching.	
26	At which institution was the person's <i>highest qualification completed</i>?	Name of institution
	• If completed overseas, also state which country.	
27	In which year did the person complete their <i>highest qualification</i>?	() Before 1971 () 1971–1980 () 1981–1985 () 1986–1990 () 1991–1992 () 1993–1994 () 1995–1996

USER REQUIREMENTS

Data on education qualifications are important for the assessment of the skill level of the labour force and are therefore valuable for the planning and implementation of labour force training programs. The Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs uses the data also as a basis for the preparation of the 'Occupational Demand Schedule' for use by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs in recruiting skilled migrants.

Some users require data on level of qualifications as a general indicator of education advantage in a socio-economic analysis of groups in the population.

Level of qualification and field of study are used in labour market analysis and planning. Field of study is required in considerable detail for studies of skill wastage or underutilisation, and for planning vocational education and training courses.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Educational institutions collect details of qualifications awarded each year.

Data on attendance at School, Higher Education, TAFE and Other educational institutions as well as information on level and field of qualification are collected in the ABS Survey on Transition from Education to Work conducted each May. While the Labour Force supplementary surveys which include education topics all provide useful

data, the sample sizes mean that detailed field of study data and small area data are not made available.

COMMENTS

The responses to name of institution and year qualification obtained are used to assist in coding qualification level and field of study. The institution at which the qualification was completed is not coded and is thus not available from census output. Year qualification obtained is coded and is available in census output.

Questions on qualifications suffer from a fairly high level of non-response particularly by those without formal qualifications.

There are also problems with interpreting 'field of study' responses, particularly for overseas qualifications, qualifications obtained some time ago and where inadequate descriptions are provided by respondents.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

The ABS Classification of Qualifications (ABSCQ) is undergoing a review and qualifications reported in the 2001 Census will be coded to the revised classification. Users wanting to take part in the review of ABSCQ should contact David Hunter on (02) 6252 6300 or by e-mail to *david.hunter@abs.gov.au*.

As a result of the review, the scope of the Qualifications variable may alter. Along with any such change there will be a full review of the questions to be used to collect qualifications data. It is possible that name of institution or year qualification obtained or both will be dropped from the 2001 census form.

AGE LEFT SCHOOL

ASSESSMENT

This topic is an important adjunct to Education Qualifications data for people without post-school qualifications, as well as an important indicator of educational need or disadvantage. Information on 'age left school' is particularly important because of the extent of change occurring in education participation and in labour market adjustment.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question relating to level of school attainment was first asked in 1966 when a question on the highest level of schooling was included. In 1976 the question was changed to age left school to overcome reporting problems due to the lack of standardisation of schooling across States and different systems used overseas. In 1991 and 1996, with Optical Mark Recognition being used to capture data, the question asked for responses in self-coded categories. There was some concern that interpretation of the word 'school' was changing amongst respondents and so some rewording of the question was made for 1996.

From time to time, some users request the inclusion of a question on highest level of schooling, rather than age left school, because 'age left school' may not be considered an adequate approximation of educational attainment at school. However, testing has shown that changes in education systems over time and differences in school systems and grading terminology between States (and overseas) continue to make a question on highest level of schooling unsuitable for a census.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

22 How old was the person when he or she left primary or secondary school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Still at primary or secondary school
• For persons who returned after a break to complete their schooling, mark the age at which they last left school.	<input type="checkbox"/> Did not go to school
	<input type="checkbox"/> 14 years or younger
	<input type="checkbox"/> 15 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 16 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 17 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 18 years
	<input type="checkbox"/> 19 years or older

USER REQUIREMENTS

Data on age left school are used as a surrogate for the highest level of schooling attained and are primarily required for:

- assessing the likely usefulness of extension courses or other educational programs; and

- an indicator of disadvantage because it shows the level of education reached by people with no post-school qualifications.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Statistics on age left school and highest grade attended are collected annually as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey.

Administrative data provide detailed information on age participation rates at school for contemporary students, and the age at which students leave school.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

If OCR is used for the 2001 Census, respondents may be asked to write in the actual age at which they left school, thereby providing more detailed information than was available for the 1996 question. If self-coding categories are retained they will be reviewed in the light of the current ABS standard for the variable.

INCOME (INCLUDING FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD INCOME)

ASSESSMENT

Income data from the census are useful as an indicator of relative advantage or disadvantage for small areas and small population groups. This is despite the fact that there is a tendency for incomes to be understated in the census and the question is subject to high non-response rates.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on income was first asked in the 1933 Census in an attempt to measure the effects of the Depression. It was re-included in 1976 and for all subsequent censuses. Each person is asked to indicate the range within which their gross income from all sources lies. Statistics on personal, family and household income are produced from this question.

In 1996, categories for nil and negative income were provided to overcome an apparent cause of non-response. To ensure that the 'nil income' category did not lead to biased results, the highest income categories were listed first.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

29	What is the gross income (including pensions and allowances) that the person usually receives each week from all sources?	() \$1,500 or more per week (\$78,000 or more per year)
	• Mark one box only.	() \$1,000 - \$1,499 per week (\$52,000 - \$77,999 per year)
	• Count all income for each person including:	() \$800 - \$999 per week (\$41,600 - \$51,999 per year)
	family payment	() \$700 - \$799 per week (\$36,400 - \$41,599 per year)
	additional family payment	() \$600 - \$699 per week (\$31,200 - \$36,399 per year)
	rental assistance	() \$500 - \$599 per week (\$26,000 - \$31,199 per year)
	pensions	() \$400 - \$499 per week (\$20,800 - \$25,999 per year)
	unemployment benefits	() \$300 - \$399 per week (\$15,600 - \$20,799 per year)
	student allowance	() \$200 - \$299 per week (\$10,400 - \$15,599 per year)
	maintenance	() \$160 - \$199 per week (\$8,320 - \$10,399 per year)
	(child support)	() \$120 - \$159 per week (\$6,240 - \$8,319 per year)
	worker's compensation	() \$80 - \$119 per week (\$4,160 - \$6,239 per year)
	superannuation	() \$40 - \$79 per week (\$2,080 - \$4,159 per year)
	wages	() \$1 - \$39 per week (\$1 - \$2,079 per year)
	salary	() Nil income
	overtime	() Negative income
	commissions and bonuses	
	interest received	
	dividends	
	rents received	
	(less expenses of operation)	
	business or farm income	
	(less expenses of operation)	

USER REQUIREMENTS

Information on the income levels of various small groups of the population and the geographic distribution is used in public and private sector planning activities. In particular it helps identify the location of the disadvantaged for the planning of social services. Broad income is a useful indicator of economic well-being and therefore is used extensively. It is usually cross-classified with other census variables.

NON-CENSUS DATA
AVAILABLE

Data on income are available from surveys of income and household expenditure conducted regularly by the ABS. A question on income is usually asked in most household surveys for use as a classificatory

variable. Family income and type of income unit are separate variables available from these surveys.

COMMENTS

Testing of the topic has shown that there is a general tendency among respondents to underestimate their income. In particular social welfare payments (e.g. family payments) and investment income such as rent and interest are often omitted. Similarly, pensioners sometimes state that they receive no income as they do not regard their pension as income.

Family and household income are derived from data on individual incomes of members of families and households. Only the incomes of people present on census night are included because of the collection and processing difficulties involved in accounting for people temporarily absent. A statistical method is used to derive family and household income from individuals' income which are reported in ranges.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

Data based on actual dollar amounts would be more useful than the range information collected to date. However, it is not proposed to ask for actual income in 2001, because testing has clearly shown that attempts to collect actual dollar amounts lead to lower response. It is likely that there would also be greater bias in the results.

Income categories will be adjusted to allow for the effect of inflation since the 1996 Census.

LABOUR FORCE STATUS

ASSESSMENT

Information about the labour force is essential for a wide range of social and economic policy and planning purposes.

While regular ABS surveys provide data on the labour force status of people, the need for such data at small area level and for small groups of the population can only be met by inclusion of the topic in the census.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Data on labour force status, employment status and status of workers have been obtained in every Australian census since 1911. In recent censuses, respondents were asked to answer a series of questions from which labour force status was derived.

From the 1986 Census on, a number of changes have been made to the labour force questions to make the census results more conceptually consistent with ABS labour force survey results.

In the 1996 Census, a question about availability to start work was included so that counts of unemployed people in the census would be more comparable to data collected in the monthly Labour Force Survey. The distinction between whether a person's own business was or was not a limited liability company was also added in an effort to increase the comparability of estimates of employees and self-employed people between the census and Labour Force Survey.

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

30 ***Last week, did the person have a full-time or part-time job of any kind?***

- Mark one box only.
- A job means any type of work including casual or temporary work or part-time work, if it was for one hour or more.

- () Yes, worked for payment or profit
- () Yes, but absent on holidays, on paid leave, on strike or temporarily stood down
- () Yes, unpaid work in a family business
- () Yes, other unpaid work
 >Go to ...
- () No, did not have job
 >Go to ...

<p>31 In the main job held <i>last week</i>, was the person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark one box only. • If the person had more than one job last week then 'main job' refers to the job in which the person usually works the most hours. 	<p>() A wage or salary earner? <input type="checkbox"/> A helper not receiving wages?</p> <p>Conducting own business in a limited liability company <input type="checkbox"/> With employees? <input type="checkbox"/> Without employees?</p> <p>Conducting own business which is not a limited liability company <input type="checkbox"/> With employees? <input type="checkbox"/> Without employees?</p>
<p>(For those who were in unpaid work or did not have a job)</p> <p>39 Did the person actively look for work at any time in the <i>last four weeks</i>?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of actively looking for work include: being registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service; checking or registering with any other employment agency; writing, telephoning or applying in person to an employer for work; or advertising for work. 	<p>() No, did not look for work <input type="checkbox"/> >Go to ... <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, looked for full-time work <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, looked for part-time work</p>
<p>40 If the person had found a job, could the person have started work <i>last week</i>?</p>	<p>() Yes, could have started work last week <input type="checkbox"/> No, already had a job to go to <input type="checkbox"/> No, temporarily ill or injured <input type="checkbox"/> No, other reason</p>

USER REQUIREMENTS

The questions used to determine a person's labour force status enable:

- each person aged 15 years or over to be classified as in the labour force or not in the labour force;
- people in the labour force to be classified as employed or unemployed; and
- employed people to be classified as wage or salary earners, self-employed, employers or unpaid helpers in family businesses.

Users require these data to provide benchmarks for assessing labour force changes for small population groups and within small geographic

areas. Because the census provides small area data, analysis of the economic condition of small areas is possible. In addition, labour force participation rates can be determined for small groups of the population such as Indigenous people, migrants from particular countries, detailed age groups, etc. Conversely, it also provides data on those people not in the labour force.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

The ABS Monthly labour Force Survey provides data on labour force status of people for States and a number of broad regions within States.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

The 1996 Census changes involving limited liability companies may have confused respondents and may not have improved data on employment status. This aspect of question design will be reviewed and options for improvement will be investigated.

OCCUPATION

ASSESSMENT

Information about occupation for small areas or for finely classified occupations is needed for a wide range of social and economic policy and planning purposes.

Regular data on Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) unit group occupations are available from the ABS Labour Force Survey but detailed survey data are subject to quite high sampling variability. Data from surveys are not available for small geographic areas.

ASCO 2nd edition will be used for coding 2001 Census data.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A variety of questions on occupation has been included in all previous censuses.

Occupation data were coded using ASCO for the first time in 1986. An additional question on the main tasks or duties that a person usually performs in his or her job was also included to assist in the coding of occupations at the unit group level.

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

For people aged 15 years or more and employed.

32 In the main job held <i>last week</i>, what was the person's occupation?	Occupation
• Give full title.
• For example, Childcare Aide, Maths Teacher, Pastrycook, Tanning Machine Operator, Apprentice Toolmaker.
• For public servants, state official designation and occupation. For armed services personnel, state rank and occupation.
33 What are the main tasks that the person <i>himself/herself</i> usually performs in that occupation?	Tasks or duties
• Give full details.
• For example, looking after children at day care centre, teaching secondary school students, making cakes and pastries, operating leather tanning machine, learning to make and repair tools and dyes.
• For managers, state main activities managed.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Detailed occupation data are needed for analysing current and potential imbalances in the supply and demand for labour of varying skills, at the national, regional and local area level. These analyses provide the input to the development of policies and programs in the fields of education, training, immigration, industry and industrial relations and also for the monitoring of changes taking place in specific occupational labour markets. The usefulness of data on occupation is considerably enhanced when analysed with detailed data on industry of employment and qualifications.

Small area and regional data about the structure of the labour market are required for the purpose of advising governments (at all levels) and their agencies responsible for delivering programs and providing services at a regional level.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

A question on occupation is included each quarter in the ABS Labour Force Survey. Information is also available from ABS special supplementary surveys and professional registration boards.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

Wording of questions and guidelines will be reviewed with the aim of further improving accuracy and effectiveness of responses.

INDUSTRY

ASSESSMENT

Although a substantial amount of information on employment by industry is available from other ABS surveys, it is not available at the detailed level for most industries or for small areas.

Extensive industry restructuring is occurring, so data on the geographic distribution of industry employment is needed to monitor these changes and provide a basis for social and economic policy and planning purposes.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on the industry of a person's employment has been included in one form or another in all censuses. The industry coding for the 1996 Census used the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC).

Industry is coded from the names and addresses of respondents' workplaces or, where no match is obtained, by using the person's response to a direct industry question. The business name matching utilises the industry codes of businesses on the Business Register maintained by the ABS. This method provides more accurate coding of industry and greater consistency of the data with that from other ABS collections based on the register.

Names and addresses of workplaces are also used to code workplaces to either the public or private sector in addition to their use for coding of work destination zones used in journey to work studies (see Journey to work).

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

For people aged 15 years or more and employed.

34 For the main job held *last week*, what was the employer's business name?

- For self-employed persons, print name of business.
- For teachers, print name of school.

Business name

.....
.....

35 For the main job held *last week*, what was the employer's workplace address?

- For persons with no fixed place of work, (e.g. taxi driver, pilot, courier) write 'no fixed address'.
- This information is used to accurately code the number of people employed in different industries.

Street number and name

.....
Suburb, rural locality or town
.....
State/Territory Postcode
.....

36 What kind of industry, business or service is carried out <i>by the employer</i> at that address?	Industry, business or service of employer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe as fully as possible, using two words or more, for example, dairy farming, footwear manufacturing. 	

Information on employer's name and address is used to determine the industry classification (including public/private sector) and is not stored in computer records. Address is also used in identifying a general location (e.g. Central Business District) for journey to work coding. Only the general location code is kept in computer records.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Employment data by industry are needed for analysing and monitoring the rate of structural change at a national and local area level. Detailed analyses are undertaken on the demographic and labour force characteristics of employees in industries and in locations which are facing structural change. Recent examples of this are in the textile, steel and heavy engineering industries. The utility of data on industry is considerably enhanced when analysed with detailed data on occupation and qualifications.

Small area and regional data about the structure of the labour market are required for the purpose of advising governments (at all levels), and their agencies responsible for delivering programs and providing services at a regional level.

Data on industry sector (i.e. whether the establishment of employment is owned by one of the various levels of government or by the private sector) are used to assess the impact of government activity in small areas.

ABS form design and coding changes for the 1996 Census allowed better sector statistics for the Indigenous population, in particular the coding of members of this population participating in the Community Development Employment Projects scheme.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

The ABS Labour Force Survey each quarter asks employed people for their industry of employment. Industry data at the ANZSIC group level are available quarterly from the Labour Force Survey, but detailed survey data are subject to high sampling variability. Unemployed people are asked each month their previous industry of employment. Personal

characteristics of the employed and unemployed are collected each month from the Labour Force Survey.

The ABS undertakes a range of surveys of businesses collecting information on employment, but only limited industry detail is available, and personal characteristics of workers are not collected.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

For the 2001 Census, a question asking person's rather than employer's workplace address will be tested, as this should be more successful in encouraging respondents to give their actual workplace address rather than their head office address.

Also, further testing will be undertaken to try and find a more effective direct industry question that would enable more reliable industry coding in those cases where matching to the Business Register is not possible.

HOURS WORKED

ASSESSMENT

Information about hours worked by employed people is important for labour market analysis of small areas or small population groups.

The information is also important as a cross-classifier for labour force variables and for users to derive a classification of full-time/part-time work. Survey data are inadequate for analyses for small areas or for small groups of the population.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question relating to the number of hours worked by employed people has been asked in each census since 1966 but has varied depending on whether only the main job or all jobs are included.

For 1996, the question referred to all jobs rather than being restricted to the main job, providing greater comparability with data from other sources.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

37 <i>Last week, how many hours did the person work in all jobs?</i>	() None
• Subtract any time off, add any overtime or extra time worked.	() 1–15 hours
	() 16–24 hours
	() 25–34 hours
	() 35–39 hours
	() 40 hours
	() 41–48 hours
	() 49 hours or more

USER REQUIREMENTS

Information on hours worked, preferably classified by industry and occupation is required by labour market economists as it allows shifts in the labour force to be analysed within small geographic regions. It is also important for labour market analyses of small groups such as Indigenous people, migrants, sole parents and specific age groups.

Data on the extent of part-time employment are used in the study of changing work patterns and growth in leisure. Information on hours worked is also needed to estimate child care needs.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Information is collected on the number of hours worked as part of the monthly Labour Force Survey. Extensive information is also available

from ABS employer surveys. However neither collection provides data for small population groups or small geographic areas.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

If OCR is used for 2001, respondents may write in the actual number of hours they worked, thereby providing more detailed information.

JOURNEY TO WORK (DESTINATION ZONE CODING)

ASSESSMENT

Detailed data on the direction and magnitude of journeys are needed for transport planning (including roads) and are used extensively in land use planning. This information is increasingly a factor in environmental issues concerned with pollution, etc.

Day time population figures are important for planners of facilities in employment centres. Journeys to and from work form the largest proportion of the total number of journeys and are concentrated in the peak periods which place the critical load on transport systems.

Journey to work data will be produced at the Statistical Local Area level. State transport authorities will be approached at a later stage to discuss arrangements for producing data for destination zones smaller than Statistical Local Areas.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The questions which enable the derivation of journey to work have been included since the 1971 Census.

There is no specific question addressing this topic. Rather journey to work is a topic derived from coding address of usual residence and address of place of work to obtain origins and destinations of employed people travelling to work.

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

USER REQUIREMENTS

The coding of addresses of place of work to destination zones allows census data to be produced on journey to work patterns and on daytime populations of employed people. Journey to work data are required by transport authorities for the analysis of travel patterns within major metropolitan areas, the modelling of fuel usage, the forecasting of public transport patronage and the analysis of catchment areas for transport routes. The data also assist policy makers in the planning of transport systems, industrial development and release of residential and industrial land.

Information on daytime populations is required for analysis of the distribution of industry across regions and for planning of private and public facilities in employment centres.

Requests have been made for data on time taken to travel to work.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

No data are available on this topic for small areas from other ABS sources. Some information is available from results of the ABS Time Use Survey.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

Collection of data on time taken to travel to work would require a new question. Given other data sources such as the Time Use Survey, the ABS view is that the case for such a question is not strong enough.

For the 2001 Census, a question asking for the person's rather than employer's workplace address will be tested, as this should be more successful in encouraging respondents to give their actual workplace address rather than a head office address.

MODE OF TRAVEL TO WORK

ASSESSMENT

Information about how people travel to work is mainly used in conjunction with journey to work data for transport planning. For example, it helps identify public transport usage between a particular origin and destination and can be used for assessing car parking requirements at a particular destination.

No viable alternatives to census data exist for this topic.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on mode of travel to work was asked for the first time in the 1976 Census. It has been repeated in all subsequent censuses with slight modifications.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

For people aged 15 years or more and employed.

38 How did the person get to work on Tuesday, 6 August 1996?

• If the person used more than one method of travel to work, mark all relevant boxes.

<input type="checkbox"/> Train
<input type="checkbox"/> Bus
<input type="checkbox"/> Ferry or tram
<input type="checkbox"/> Taxi
<input type="checkbox"/> Car - as driver
<input type="checkbox"/> Car - as passenger
<input type="checkbox"/> Motorbike or motor scooter
<input type="checkbox"/> Bicycle
<input type="checkbox"/> Walked only
<input type="checkbox"/> Worked at home
<input type="checkbox"/> Other
<input type="checkbox"/> Did not go to work

USER REQUIREMENTS

Users have indicated that data on mode of travel to work are fundamental to journey to work analysis and to transport planning in general. Data are also used to:

- identify public transport customer groups;
- measure public transport patronage; and
- assist in energy conservation studies.

NON-CENSUS DATA
AVAILABLE

No ABS surveys provide this information. Some information is available from public transport records.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR
2001 CENSUS

For the 2001 Census question, 'light rail' may be included amongst the response categories.

NUMBER OF MOTOR VEHICLES GARAGED

ASSESSMENT

This topic is a significant part of a 'package' of transport-related census topics (Journey to work and Mode of travel to work) and has an important place in transport and town planning. It also serves as a useful socio-economic indicator.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on number of vehicles was first asked in the 1966 Census. Since 1976, households have been asked to record the number of registered motor vehicles owned or used by members of the household garaged at or near their dwelling.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

42 How many registered motor vehicles owned or used by members of this household were garaged or parked at or near this dwelling on the night of Tuesday, 6 August 1996?	<input type="checkbox"/> None
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 motor vehicle
	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 motor vehicles
	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 motor vehicles
	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 motor vehicles
	or more

- Exclude motor bikes, motor scooters, tractors.
- Include company vehicles kept at home.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Information on number of vehicles garaged at a dwelling is required for transport modelling, town planning, market research and as a social and economic indicator. Data on the distribution of vehicles are important for indicating needs such as parking and public transport. It is particularly important in identifying the mobility of particular segments of the population when cross-classified with other characteristics.

NON-CENSUS DATA

AVAILABLE

A range of statistics on motor vehicles is available from the ABS' Survey of Motor Vehicle Usage, and Household Expenditure Survey in addition to Motor Vehicle Registration records. These collections, however, do not allow extensive cross-classification of vehicle counts with the characteristics of their owners. Some small area data are available from motor vehicle registration statistics.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR
2001 CENSUS

For 2001, ABS is considering also collecting data on the number of motor bikes and motor scooters.

If OCR is adopted for 2001, respondents may be asked to write in the numbers of vehicles rather than mark a self-coding box.

NUMBER OF BEDROOMS

ASSESSMENT

The census is the only comprehensive source of data on number of bedrooms at small area level.

Housing authorities and other users of ABS information have indicated that data of this kind are needed as a measure of overcrowding and of the adequacy of dwelling stock which are key social issues.

While a small number of users would prefer a question on number of rooms, given the definitional problems and extra costs involved with such a question, data on number of bedrooms are acceptable.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on number of rooms/bedrooms has been included in every Australian census since 1911.

While the 1986 Census household form asked householders to indicate the numbers of various room types, only the number of bedrooms was entered into the computer record. The 1991 and 1996 Censuses collected data on the number of bedrooms only.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

43 How many bedrooms are there in this dwelling?	<input type="checkbox"/> None (includes Bedsitter)
	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 bedroom
	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 bedrooms
	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 bedrooms
	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 bedrooms
	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 bedrooms or more

USER REQUIREMENTS

A question on number of rooms/bedrooms is required:

- to provide some indication of dwelling size; and
- to provide an indication of overcrowding by calculating occupancy ratios (i.e. the number of people per room/bedroom).

Small area level data on occupancy ratios are required as a broad measure of housing standards when assessing the nature and utilisation of the Australian housing stock. Data on the number of bedrooms are one of several factors used to calculate weights for the rent and mortgage component of the Consumer Price Index.

Virtually all user requirements are met by a question on the number of bedrooms.

NON-CENSUS DATA
AVAILABLE

Data on the number of bedrooms are available from the Survey of Housing, Survey of Income and Housing Costs and Amenities, Household Expenditure Survey, Australian Housing Survey, and a continuous Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR
2001 CENSUS

If OCR is used for the 2001 Census, respondents may be asked to write in the number of bedrooms in their dwellings rather than mark a response category.

TYPE OF TENURE (NATURE OF OCCUPANCY)

ASSESSMENT

Information about the proportions of housing owned, being purchased or rented and about the characteristics of associated households are needed for housing and social welfare policy and planning in both the government and the private sector.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Data about whether a dwelling is owned, being purchased or rented have been obtained in all censuses since 1911.

From 1971 until 1991, the information on type of tenure was derived from the answers to more than one question. A single, direct question was used to determine type of tenure for 1996. More detailed responses were listed, catering for a greater variety of tenancy/financial arrangements than in previous censuses.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

45 Mark the box which best describes this dwelling.	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully owned >Go to ...
• Owners include owners of caravans, manufactured homes or houseboats regardless of whether or not the site is owned.	<input type="checkbox"/> Being purchased >Go to ...
	<input type="checkbox"/> Being purchased under a rent/buy scheme
	<input type="checkbox"/> Being rented
	<input type="checkbox"/> Being occupied rent-free
	<input type="checkbox"/> Being occupied under a life tenure scheme >Go to ...
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

USER REQUIREMENTS

Type of tenure (whether a dwelling is rented, owned or being purchased) is a characteristic used to classify a range of other census data about households and dwellings. Data classified in this way are needed to monitor housing security, mobility issues and home ownership trends, and to develop housing and social welfare policies.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Data on type of tenure are available from:

- Rental Investors Survey;
- Australian Housing Survey; and
- a continuous Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR
2001 CENSUS

1996 Census data will be evaluated to determine whether the question design and response categories need further modification for the 2001 Census.

In addition, ABS standards on Tenure Type are currently under review. The outcome of the review will be considered in 2001 Census question design.

HOUSING LOAN REPAYMENTS

ASSESSMENT

The census is the only source of housing loan repayments data for small areas and small groups of the population. Such data are important for housing policy-making and planning, and for studying the housing conditions of minority populations.

Housing loan repayment data are also used in conjunction with income data as an approximation of discretionary income.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on mortgage was asked for the first time in the 1976 Census. The question was simplified for the 1981 Census to ask only whether there was a mortgage and the monthly payments on the total mortgage on the dwelling. Since the 1986 Census, the question has asked the monthly payment being made on the loan(s) for the dwelling.

Because of the emergence of rent-buy schemes, and strong user demand for actual amounts rather than range data, a new approach to collecting the data was undertaken for 1996. A question collecting actual amounts paid for the dwelling was asked, instead of the range data obtained in the 1991 Census. Type of tenure responses were used to determine whether payments were recorded as rent or loan repayments.

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

44 How much does your household pay for this dwelling?	\$□□□□.□□ per week
	OR
• Include rent and mortgage repayments and site fees if caravan or manufactured home in caravan park or manufactured home estate.	\$□□□□.□□ per fortnight
	OR
• Exclude water rates, council rates, repairs, maintenance and other fees.	\$□□□□.□□ per month
• If no payments, please mark 'NIL' box.	() NIL
 45 Mark the box which best describes this dwelling.	 () Fully owned >Go to ...
• Owners include owners of caravans, manufactured homes or houseboats regardless of whether or not the site is owned.	() Being purchased >Go to ...
	() Being purchased under a rent/buy scheme
	() Being rented
	() Being occupied rent-free
	() Being occupied under a life tenure scheme >Go to ...
	() Other

USER REQUIREMENTS

Users require data on housing loan repayments classified by household characteristics to measure access to home ownership and provide benchmark data for evaluation of housing needs, housing finance and housing demand. Regional and small area (local government area) data are required.

Used in conjunction with income, housing loan repayment data provide an indication of disposable income.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Data on housing loan repayments are available from:

- Survey of Families in Australia;
- Rental Tenants Survey;
- Australian Housing Survey;
- Household Expenditure Survey; and
- a continuous Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

Because of small sample sizes, surveys cannot provide small area data.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

The ABS standard on Tenure Type is currently under review and the outcome of the review will be considered in 2001 Census question design. Other aspects of the 1996 question design will be evaluated before finalising the 2001 design.

RENT

ASSESSMENT

The census is the only source of rent data for small areas and for small groups of the population. Such data are important for housing policy-making and planning, and for studying the housing conditions of minority populations.

Rent data are also used in conjunction with income data to give an indication of discretionary income.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Weekly rent paid for each dwelling has been asked in every Australian census since 1911. In 1947, householders were also asked to indicate whether the dwelling was rented furnished or unfurnished. Since 1971, in addition to stating the weekly rent and whether the dwelling was furnished or unfurnished, householders have been asked to indicate the type of landlord.

Because of the emergence of rent-buy schemes, and strong user demand for actual amounts rather than range data, a new approach to collecting the data was undertaken for 1996. A question collecting actual amounts paid for the dwelling was asked, instead of the range data obtained in the 1991 Census. Type of tenure responses were used to determine whether payments were recorded as rent or loan repayments.

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

44 How much does your household pay for this dwelling?	\$ <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> . <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> per week
	OR
• Include rent and mortgage repayments and site fees if caravan or manufactured home in caravan park or manufactured home estate.	\$ <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> . <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> per fortnight
	OR
• Exclude water rates, council rates, repairs, maintenance and other fees.	\$ <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> . <input type="text"/> <input type="text"/> per month
• If no payments, please mark 'NIL' box.	() NIL

<p>45 Mark the box which best describes this dwelling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Owners include owners of caravans, manufactured homes or houseboats regardless of whether or not the site is owned. 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Fully owned >Go to ...</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Being purchased >Go to ...</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Being purchased under a rent/buy scheme</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Being rented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Being occupied rent-free</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Being occupied under a life tenure scheme >Go to ...</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>
<p>46 If this dwelling is being rented, who is it rented from?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Private landlord not in the same household</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Real estate agent</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> State Housing Commission or Trust</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Community or co-operative housing group</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Employer - Government</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Employer - other</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other</p>
<p>47 If this dwelling is being rented, was it furnished by the landlord?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, fully furnished</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes, partly furnished</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No, unfurnished</p>

USER REQUIREMENTS

Users have indicated that the rental question is important for housing policy planning in Australia. In particular, rental information produced from the census aids in the identification of housing needs and the extent to which specific groups (e.g. low income households, aged people and Indigenous people) have access to adequate housing.

Rent data from the census are used by the ABS in calculating estimates of imputed rent for the National Accounts and checking the representativeness of dwelling samples used in the Consumer Price Index.

Used in conjunction with income, rent data provide an indication of disposable income.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Data on rent are available from:

- Survey of Income and Housing Costs and Amenities;
- Survey of Families in Australia;

- Rental Tenants Survey;
- Australian Housing Survey;
- Household Expenditure Survey; and
- a continuous Survey of Income and Housing Costs.

Because of small sample sizes, surveys cannot provide small area data.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

The ABS standards for Tenure Type and Landlord Type are currently under review, and the outcome of the reviews will be considered in 2001 Census question design. Other aspects of the 1996 question design will be evaluated before finalising the 2001 design.

The question on whether the dwelling is rented furnished or unfurnished may be dropped from the 2001 Census (see Chapter 7).

STRUCTURE OF PRIVATE DWELLING (CLASSIFICATION)

ASSESSMENT

There is a strong user demand for data on dwelling structure, especially at small area level and for small groups of the population, to determine urban form and density. The question is answered by the collector which contributes marginally to collection costs but requires no response by the public.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on class of dwelling was asked in every Australian census from 1911.

Caravans have been included as a response option since 1961 and caravans in caravan parks were first enumerated with household forms in 1986.

Traditionally the census has defined a dwelling as the space occupied by a household. Therefore, where a dwelling unit was shared by more than a single household, the procedure led to an overcount of dwellings. To measure this effect, attempts have been made to identify dwellings that comprised a sharing of private house or flat (1954, 1976) or in which a kitchen or bathroom was shared (1971, 1976). However, the quality of response to these questions was poor.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

(Answered by collector)

Dwelling Structure

Separate house

Semi-detached, row or terrace house, townhouse etc.

1 storey

2 or more storeys

Flat, unit or apartment

In a 1 or 2 storey block

In a 3 storey block

In a 4 or more storey block

Attached to a house

Caravan, cabin, houseboat

Improvised home, tent, sleepers out

House or flat attached to a shop, office etc.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Users require data about the types of private dwelling structure for the analysis of personal and household (including family) characteristics in relation to the physical structure that houses them. The data are also used for providing the benchmark for regular estimates of the different types of housing available.

Initiatives in housing policy such as the National Housing Strategy have strengthened the need for detailed information about Australia's housing stock.

The results are used:

- to determine changes in housing patterns;
- to review existing housing stock for use in housing policy advice;
- for land use forecasting; and
- for transport planning.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

The ABS conducts a quarterly Building Activity Collection which provides data on additions to the stock of private dwellings. Information on type of dwelling has also been collected in housing and energy surveys conducted by ABS.

LOCATION OF PRIVATE DWELLING (CLASSIFICATION)

ASSESSMENT

This classification was introduced for the 1996 Census to accommodate changes in the scope of private dwellings which was extended to include self contained dwellings in retirement villages and dwellings in manufactured home estates. The change allows for a fuller range of data to be collected for these populations as well as permitting users to maintain a time series with previous census dwelling data.

The question is answered by the collector which contributes marginally to collection costs but requires no response by the public.

BACKGROUND

For the 1996 Census, private dwellings were classified according to whether they were located in caravan parks (or marinas), manufactured home estates, retirement villages or elsewhere.

On the basis of this information, both dwelling and household data are able to be classified according to these types of location.

Since 1986, dwellings in caravan parks and marinas have been treated as private dwellings. From 1996, self contained units in retirement villages and dwellings in manufactured home estates were also counted as private dwellings.

This classification complements the existing private dwelling structure classification and enables the ABS to meet user requirements for data about these alternative forms of housing and their occupants.

USER REQUIREMENTS

The changes reflect the growing number of people residing long term in these types of accommodation and the consequent user requirements for a fuller range of household and family statistics for these population groups. This information is not available from existing collections.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

No other sources of data on location of private dwelling exist.

NON-PRIVATE DWELLING (CLASSIFICATION)

ASSESSMENT

Census data about people residing in non-private dwellings is important for planning and delivery of many services. Over three quarters of a million people were enumerated in non-private dwellings in the 1996 Census.

The classification of non-private dwellings (including hotels, motels, hospitals, boarding houses, etc.) is partially dependent on the perceptions of persons-in-charge and arrangements made for collecting data. As a result, information about non-private dwellings and the people in such dwellings is less accurate than that for private dwellings.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Non-private dwellings have been enumerated and classified in all Australian censuses since Federation. Caravan parks were treated as non-private dwellings up until the 1981 Census, but since the 1986 Census, caravans in caravan parks have been enumerated as private dwellings using household forms.

For the 1996 Census, self contained dwellings in retirement villages and dwellings in manufactured home estates were treated as private dwellings.

TYPE OF QUESTION

Information required for the classification of non-private dwellings is collected from persons-in-charge.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Information on persons in non-private dwellings is required for:

- analysis of programs for the aged and disabled; and
- policy analysis and policy formulation in the development and financing of projects in the areas of health, the aged, children and rehabilitation.

There is need for consistency between output from the census and ABS population surveys and this will be investigated prior to further consultation about census outputs.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Government departments have information on government-funded institutions although generally only limited details are available on the characteristics of residents.

CHAPTER 7

TOPICS UNDER REVIEW

TOPICS UNDER REVIEW

This chapter sets out assessments of a small number of topics about which the ABS either wishes to inform users of current development or seeks further information. Along with the assessments is shown the current ABS view on whether the topic should be included in the 2001 Census or not. The topics are:

- Birthplace of parents
- Ancestry
- Australians of South Sea Island descent
- Australian citizenship
- Disability
- Whether rented furnished or unfurnished

BIRTHPLACE OF PARENTS

ASSESSMENT

The questions on birthplace of parents provide objective data on ethnicity in general and on the second-generation population in particular. The data provides important background information to planning decisions including those relating to access and equity.

Some groups in the community have expressed a need for data about ethnic affiliation of individuals which cannot be identified through the existing questions on language, religion, birthplace (of individuals and of their parents) and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Given the extent of data items relating to cultural affiliation already in the census, ABS is seeking the views of users about the need for information on birthplace of parents as well as, or instead of, information from an ancestry question (see Ancestry).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on birthplace of parents was first asked in 1921, when the data were used to investigate the extent of the relationship between birthplace and race of persons born in Asia who were resident in Australia. The results showed that an appreciable proportion of people born in Japan and other Asian countries, and a majority of those born in India, were of European parentage. No tabulations of birthplace of parents were released from that census.

A question on birthplace of parents was not asked again until 1971 and has been asked in all subsequent Australian censuses.

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

15 In which country was the person's father born?	<input type="checkbox"/> Australia
	<input type="checkbox"/> England
	<input type="checkbox"/> Scotland
	<input type="checkbox"/> Italy
	<input type="checkbox"/> Greece
	<input type="checkbox"/> New Zealand
	<input type="checkbox"/> The Netherlands
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other - please specify

16 In which country was the person's mother born?

() Australia
() England
() Scotland
() Italy
() Greece
() New Zealand
() The Netherlands
() Other - please specify

The list of response categories for this question is designed to reflect those countries which are reported most often at the census.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Data on birthplace of parents indicate the ethnic background of Australians and are used in planning the delivery of services to migrants and in access and equity reviews.

The data are used in assessments of communities which in turn affect the allocation of resources/facilities that are made on a community basis.

They are also used in analysis of the impact of migration flows from particular countries through to the second generation. Most uses of the data require detailed data for the large number of source countries and for small areas.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

The only regular data on birthplace of parents published by the ABS are derived from birth and marriage registrations. Data on birthplace of parents has been occasionally obtained in ABS surveys.

POSSIBLE CHANGES FOR 2001 CENSUS

If OCR is used for the 2001 Census, the birthplace of parents questions may only have two listed response categories — Australia and Other, and those marking the latter could be asked to write in their specific country answers. The viability of such options will be tested before adoption.

For 2001, the ABS is re-examining the feasibility of asking a question on ethnic origin (see separate topic heading in Chapter 7). If such a question were to be included it may not be possible to retain the birthplace of parents questions.

ANCESTRY

ASSESSMENT

The ABS recognises the demand for a census question about ethnic or cultural origin, particularly for those groups which cannot be identified adequately through the existing questions on language, religion, birthplace of individuals and their parents, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin. Provided ABS can be convinced there is sufficient justification and it is shown that high quality data can be collected, an ancestry question could be included in the 2001 Census.

However, given the extent of data items relating to ethnic origin already in the census, the ABS view is that an ancestry question should only be included in place of questions asked in previous censuses about birthplace of parents.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on each person's ancestry, (i.e. ethnic or cultural origin) was asked for the first time in the 1986 Census. This was the result of investigation by the 1986 Population Census Ethnicity Committee on the need for data on ethnicity other than language, birthplace or birthplace of parents. The question was designed to identify the respondent's origin rather than a subjective perception of their ethnic background. Even so, some subjectivity was involved because of broad interpretations of what the term ancestry meant or confusion as to what was required.

Evaluation of the 1986 Census results found ancestry data did not add to data already obtained on language and birthplace for very many cultural groups. However, it did provide some additional information on some cultural groups, members of which are born in many countries (e.g. people of Chinese and Indian ancestry) or distinct groupings within a country (e.g. Maoris as a subset of people born in New Zealand). The additional information was less useful where the person had already indicated use of a language spoken by the cultural group (e.g. Cantonese or Hindi).

Ancestry proved to be a costly topic to code.

Because of doubts about data quality and as there was insufficient evidence of the value of 1986 Census ancestry data, an ancestry question was not included in the 1991 Census. Despite testing of alternatives in 1993, it did not prove feasible to include either an ancestry or other direct ethnic origin question in the 1996 Census.

Results from the 1993 field testing of two types of ancestry/ethnic identification questions demonstrated that a very high proportion of people either did not answer the question or simply responded 'Australian' as their ancestry. The proportion of respondents identifying their ancestry as Australian — explicitly or by derivation — was more than double the proportion doing so in 1986. The test found that many

people born in Australia with one or both parents born overseas indicated that their ancestry was the same as their country of birth (i.e. Australia). While this may have reflected respondents' self-identification, it also reflected an inaccurate interpretation of the word ancestry.

The difference in the proportion of people reporting an Australian ancestry between the 1986 Census and the 1993 test was undoubtedly influenced by question design changes. The 1993 test questions were explicit in identifying 'Australian' as an option and it is considered unrealistic for any possible future census question on ancestry not to make it clear that 'Australian' is an option.

In 1995 the ABS established a Census Consultative Group on Ancestry, to seek user input and to identify user requirements for these data, research international practices and develop and test questions which may provide acceptable and accurate data at a reasonable cost.

Based on recommendations from the Census Consultative Group on Ancestry, a question using concepts similar to those used in 1986, but with some self-coded response categories including 'Australian', was included in a census test conducted in May 1997. Further testing will be undertaken on this topic with the aim of developing an effective question design.

1986 CENSUS QUESTION

What is this person's ancestry?	Ancestry
• For example, Greek, English, Indian, Armenian, Aboriginal, Chinese etc.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Although a question about ethnic or cultural origin does not necessarily identify current ethnic affiliation, some groups in the community have expressed a need for data about ethnic affiliation of individuals which cannot be identified through the existing questions on language, religion, birthplace of individuals and of their parents and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin.

AUSTRALIANS OF SOUTH SEA ISLAND DESCENT

ASSESSMENT

Australians of South Sea Island descent are a group that has been identified by the Federal Government as a minority group suffering disadvantage. There is a need for data about their geographical distribution and social characteristics. The ABS is working to find a way to meet this demand.

One possible solution to the need for data to separately identify Australian South Sea Islanders may be an ancestry or ethnic origin question in the census. However, further research and testing will be required to establish whether this group can be successfully distinguished from other peoples originating from the Pacific. This is especially difficult in a self-enumeration collection with its limited opportunity for explaining the purpose of questions to respondents.

ABS is seeking the views of potential users of data about their data needs and how they plan to use the data.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A census question identifying Australians of South Sea Island descent has not previously been asked.

In 1994, a Bill was passed in Parliament recognising Australian South Sea Islanders as a disadvantaged minority group. These people are the group of Australians who are descendants of those South Sea Islanders brought to Australia as indentured labour under work schemes around the turn of the century. As a result of the 1994 legislation, statistical information about this population is required.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

A range of data about Australian South Sea Islanders is contained in the report *The Call for Recognition*, Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, December 1992.

AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP

ASSESSMENT

Citizenship data are used for measuring the rate of take up of citizenship amongst the overseas-born population and for monitoring electoral enrolments. Citizenship data are also used in costing reciprocal social security arrangements with other countries.

Given the availability of some alternative data and the constraints on how many topics it is feasible to include in the census, the ABS is seeking further justification for continuing to ask this question each five years.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on nationality was first asked in 1921, when respondents were asked to indicate what national subject they were by means of birthplace, parentage or naturalization. In 1966 and 1971 the term 'nationality or citizenship' was used, and from 1976 onwards the question has used the word 'citizenship'. Since 1986, the question on citizenship has been self-coding with only two response categories (Australian citizen or not).

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

11 Is the person an Australian citizen?	(<input type="checkbox"/>) Yes, Australian citizen
	(<input type="checkbox"/>) No

USER REQUIREMENTS

Data on citizenship are used for targeting electoral roll maintenance, citizenship promotion activities and costing reciprocal social security agreements with overseas countries. They also indicate the extent to which people born in certain countries take up Australian citizenship. The data are often cross-classified with birthplace, year of arrival and age data.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Census output serves as the benchmark for statistics on citizenship. This information can be updated by using:

- data on the country of citizenship of settler arrivals indicated on passenger cards completed by people entering and leaving Australia; and
- data on the number of migrants who become Australian citizens.

Both of these sources of information have limitations because they do not provide a complete picture of the total number of citizens at any point in time, nor do they provide reliable small area data.

DISABILITY

ASSESSMENT

There was strong user demand to include a question on disability in the 1996 Census and the ABS has received several requests already for a disability question in the 2001 Census. The ABS appreciates the need for small area data on disabilities.

With this in mind, the ABS established a Census Consultative Group on Disability in 1995, to seek user input and to identify user requirements for this data, research international practices and develop and test disability questions which may provide acceptable and accurate data.

Questions developed during these consultations will be tested with the aim of finding a suitable question (or a small number of questions) which would provide high quality data on disability.

The ABS view is that this topic should be included in the 2001 Census, but only if the testing program produces questions which provide high quality data.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Questions relating to disabilities of respondents were included in the 1911, 1921 and 1933 Australian censuses. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they were deaf, dumb or blind. A more general question on the effect of disabilities was asked in 1976. However, the quality of data obtained from this question was poor and no results were released.

Testing was undertaken in 1993 to attempt to develop suitable disability questions for inclusion in the 1996 Census. However, no effective question design was found in time for inclusion in that census. (See ABS Working Paper 94/3, Disability Census Test: November 1993 for more information). Given that there was insufficient time for further testing no questions on disability were included in the 1996 Census.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Data are required for developing Federal and State Government policies and community-based programs. While much of this data is only required for large geographic areas, detailed data at the small area level and for small population groups are required for planning service delivery.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Surveys on disability were conducted by the ABS in 1981 and 1988. A survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers was run in 1993 and another is planned for 1998.

These surveys on disability are comprehensive in scope and provided detailed information about disability in Australia and individual States. The surveys asked a range of demographic questions similar to those asked in the census, and provided a range of disability data cross-tabulated with age, sex, education, employment and household data. However, reliable small-area data are not available from the surveys.

Another way in which the needs for small area data on disability can be met is through use of synthetic estimates. These are the predictions of a model which has been developed by ABS. Synthetic estimates use age and sex patterns in a region, from the most recent census, together with the results of the latest Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers, to predict the prevalence of disability in that area.

The 1997 Time Use Survey includes some questions to identify people in the household with disabilities. The 1993/94 Household Expenditure Survey also included a module of questions to identify people with a disability or handicap in households. Since then the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey conducted in 1994 and several other ABS surveys have included a module of questions to identify long term conditions and severe handicaps.

Data are available from the Department of Social Security in relation to recipients of invalid pensions, sickness benefits, child disability allowance and mobility allowance. Data are available for postcode areas and social security regions for the first three types of recipient. However, not all people with disabilities receive an invalid pension.

EXPERIENCE IN OTHER COUNTRIES

Statistical agencies in most industrialised countries either do not ask a disability question in their censuses, or have experienced serious data quality problems when they have. A review of information on disabilities from such censuses in other countries has shown that the information obtained is unreliable for most practical applications.

WHETHER RENTED FURNISHED OR UNFURNISHED

ASSESSMENT

The question on whether a dwelling is rented furnished or unfurnished assists in interpreting data on the amount of rent paid. ABS has some doubt about the reliability and usefulness of this information so it is seeking further justification for continuing to ask this question.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Weekly rent paid for each dwelling has been asked in every Australian census since 1911. In 1947, householders were also asked to indicate whether the dwelling was rented furnished or unfurnished.

1996 CENSUS QUESTIONS

45 Mark the box which best describes this dwelling.

- Owners include owners of caravans, manufactured homes or houseboats regardless of whether or not the site is owned.

() Fully owned >Go to ...
() Being purchased >Go to ...
() Being purchased under a rent/buy scheme
() Being rented
() Being occupied rent-free
() Being occupied under a life tenure scheme >Go to ...
() Other

47 If this dwelling is being rented, was it furnished by the landlord?

() Yes, fully furnished
() Yes, partly furnished
() No, unfurnished

CHAPTER 8

TOPICS TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE 2001 CENSUS

TOPICS EXCLUDED

It is the ABS view that the topics assessed on the following pages should be excluded from the 2001 Census. The topics are:

Issue (number of children ever born)
Usual Major Activity

ISSUE (NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN)

ASSESSMENT

After the 1986 Census, ABS concluded that there was justification for collecting data on number of children ever born only at ten yearly intervals. ABS still holds this view and, given the topic was included in 1996, ABS considers that it should not be included in the 2001 Census. Also, given the sensitivity of the topic, the need for such a question will be reviewed before determining the content of the 2006 Census.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A question on the number of children ever born was asked in nearly all Australian censuses up until and including 1986. The question was not included in the 1991 Census because it was not considered necessary to collect data on this topic every five years, but it was included in the 1996 Census.

1996 CENSUS QUESTION

The 1996 Census question was asked of females aged 15 years or more.

28 For each female, how many babies has she ever had?	<input type="checkbox"/> None
• Include only live births.	<input type="checkbox"/> One
	<input type="checkbox"/> Two
	<input type="checkbox"/> Three
	<input type="checkbox"/> Four
	<input type="checkbox"/> Five
	<input type="checkbox"/> Six or more

USER REQUIREMENTS

Data on fertility are required for investigations of fertility differentials between various groups such as Indigenous people, migrants and different socio-economic groups. Such information is needed for predicting future fertility of subgroups and for forming related policies.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

Some information on the number of children ever born is available from the 1992 Family Survey but not for small groups of the population. Birth registrations and hospital based data (midwives) provide some information on fertility.

USUAL MAJOR ACTIVITY

ASSESSMENT

Submissions have been made in the past for census questions about activities outside those covered by labour force statistics (such as unpaid work in the home or unpaid voluntary activities) and to identify the status of people not in the labour force e.g. 'retired' or 'student'. One way to collect such information would be to include a question or questions about usual major activity.

ABS is not aware of any need for these data for small areas or for small population groups. Consequently it is the ABS view that a question on usual major activity is not justified in the 2001 Census.

USER REQUIREMENTS

Requests have been received for data on voluntary work, unpaid work in the home (including child care, care of the aged and infirm) and for retirees (especially self-funded retirees).

Users advise that data about usual major activity identify significant areas of human activity not usually monitored in more traditional social and economic statistics. Information on unpaid activities is important in measuring the characteristics of groups with special needs (the elderly, children, the disabled and those who care for them), and assisting in planning for both work and non-work environments.

NON-CENSUS DATA AVAILABLE

The Time Use Surveys define and measure many of the activities identified, and these have been conducted regularly in recent years. Additional information has been collected in surveys on Disability, Ageing and Carers, a 1995 national Survey of Voluntary Work, in a 1997 Retirement and Retirement Intentions Survey and in some ABS State Supplementary Surveys.

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APPENDIX 1

ABOUT MAKING SUBMISSIONS AND THE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

INTRODUCTION

Most of the information in this appendix is included in the Submission Guidelines and Authorisation document enclosed with this publication and available electronically via the ABS web site at <http://www.abs.gov.au> or by e-mailing census2001@abs.gov.au.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions need to address the questions that are included at the back of the Guidelines and Authorisation document so that they can be carefully assessed.

A copy of the questions to be addressed when making a submission is also at Appendix 2.

The Submission Guidelines and Authorisation document includes space for the name and contact details of the person or organisation making the submission. These details need to be completed.

Anonymous submissions will not be considered.

AUTHORISATION

The Submission Guidelines and Authorisation document includes a release that gives permission to the ABS to make public reference to information provided in the submission. This is simply a yes or no option. If neither is completed, the ABS will assume that permission has been given. Use of information provided in the submission is mainly to summarise the case for or against a topic or to answer questions from members of parliament about the number and nature of submissions received.

If you are making a submission in hardcopy the Submission Guidelines and Authorisation page must be completed and sent in with your submission.

MORE THAN ONE SUBMISSION

Each topic will be considered on its own merits (though some topics are related to others). A separate submission should be made for each topic. Submissions should clearly separate topics and address the questions outlined in the Submission Guidelines and Authorisation document and Appendix 2 of the publication for each topic.

WHERE TO SEND SUBMISSIONS

Electronic submissions should be sent to *census2001@abs.gov.au*. A copy of the electronic form can be found at *http://www.abs.gov.au* or can be e-mailed on request.

Hardcopy submissions should be sent to:

Judy Aitkin
Population Census Development, W4Gb
Australian Bureau of Statistics
PO Box 10
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

or faxed to:

(02) 6252 7512

CLOSING DATE

The closing date for submissions is Thursday, 30 April 1998.

GENERAL NOTES ABOUT MAKING SUBMISSIONS

Each submission for the inclusion or modification of a topic in the census requires strong justification against the assessment criteria set out below. To include a new topic in the census means that ABS will have to consider removing a topic to maintain cost and respondent burden at reasonable levels. People making a submission to include a topic are asked to nominate one to exclude.

There is no need to make a submission to include a topic which the ABS view already is to include unless it is to strengthen the justification for the topic.

If changes to topics included in the 1996 Census are considered to be required, details of the proposed changes need to be included in the submission.

Specific examples of census output and how they would be used to inform decision making or research will strengthen the justification of a topic.

Interested organisations and persons who have comments to make on issues other than the inclusion or modification of a topic, are asked to answer question 11 of the questions to be addressed in the Submission Guidelines and Authorisation document or Appendix 2 of the publication.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

A self-enumeration approach is used in the census. That is, each householder, or one householder on behalf of other members of the household, is asked to answer the questions on the census form on its own behalf and with relatively little assistance from the census collector. This method imposes some constraints on the types of topics and questions that can be included in the census if the public are to provide high quality and accurate information. There is also a need to limit the total number of questions asked in order to keep respondent load to an acceptable level and to ensure high levels of cooperation. Combined with this, is the need to ensure that the large census operation is conducted as efficiently and effectively as possible.

These constraints are reflected in the criteria used to assess topics for inclusion in the census. The assessment criteria are whether:

- 1 the topic is of major national importance;
- 2 there is a need for data on the topic for small groups in the population or for small geographic areas; and
- 3 the topic is suitable for inclusion in the census.

Whether the topic is of major national importance

The census is a large and costly operation and it imposes a load on the householders who are required to answer the questions. It is essential that every question asked has a specific purpose and that the purpose is of major national importance. Submissions proposing the inclusion of new topics should clearly indicate the value of the information by showing the uses to which it will be put. Submissions should also spell out the specific consequences if the topic is not included in the census.

Need for data for small population groups or for small geographic areas

The census is appropriate for topics for which users require:

- detailed information for a large number of small geographic areas;
- information about small groups in the population that cannot be identified through other means (e.g. administrative records); and
- cross-classification with other characteristics collected in the census.

Information required for broad geographic areas only (e.g. at the state or national level) may be better obtained by other means (e.g. sample surveys) depending on the detail of the cross-classification required. If the need is restricted to information about a few specific small areas, other methods could be more appropriate.

Consideration should be given to whether data are available from other sources. Similar or surrogate data may be collected by another organisation, there may have been surveys already conducted or planned to be conducted by the ABS, or from some form of administrative records.

The ABS produces an extensive range of information from economic censuses and surveys, administrative sources, and a comprehensive program of population surveys. While the ABS population surveys are not able to collect the detailed information that can be obtained from the census for small groups or small areas, there are general advantages associated with interviewers collecting the data rather than the self-enumeration method used in the census, and also in terms of timeliness of data availability.

The census cannot provide:

- up-to-date information - it normally takes about 11 months before census results start to become generally available and because of the size of the task it may be several years before full information on some topics is obtained; and
- information about identified persons - the ABS collects data under the authority of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* which precludes the release of data in any form which is likely to enable the identification of a particular person or organisation.

Whether the topic is suitable for inclusion in the census

The self-enumeration method used in the census requires that questions asked be readily understood by all householders.

In general, census topics should not:

- cause an adverse reaction from people by invading their personal privacy to an unacceptable degree - including topics of this nature will produce poor quality data for the questions concerned and may also affect responses to other questions;
- need more than one or two questions to obtain the required information - such topics impose an excessive burden on respondents and occupy space which could be used for other topics;
- require an overlong explanation or instruction to ensure an accurate answer - research has shown that people often do not read such instructions;
- seek information not generally known such as 'Where was your maternal grandmother born?' - data collected from such a question would not be reliable;

- ask things which people are unlikely to accurately remember - for example: 'Did your family take a holiday lasting at least seven days, five years ago... one year ago... ?';
- seek opinions or attitudes; or
- present major coding problems or need extensive processing.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

ABS will be holding seminars in each capital city during April 1998 to explain the consultation process and facilitate understanding of the requirements for justifying inclusion of topics in the Census. The seminars will also provide opportunities for people to present arguments about topics or other census issues that concern them.

Following assessment of submissions, final recommendations on the nature and content of the 2001 Census will be discussed with the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC) around July 1998. People who have provided submissions will be advised of the outcome of these discussions. The ABS will then make a submission to the Government, including recommendations on the nature and content of the 2001 Census. A government decision about the content of the 2001 Census is expected to be known by the end of 1999.

INFORMATION OR SUBMISSIONS ABOUT ABS SURVEYS

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State Government users considering putting in a proposal for a survey to be conducted should forward their submissions through the relevant statistical co-ordinating body, or, in the case of NSW, through the ABS Regional Office.

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONS

HOW TO COMPLETE A SUBMISSION FORM:

A separate submission is required for each topic.

Remember:

- a new topic MUST be of major national importance;
- there MUST be a need for tabulations about small groups in the population or for small geographic areas; and
- a new question MUST ask for information which people CAN and are WILLING to provide.

For more detail about making a submission please read the Guidelines for Submissions attached to this form or Appendix 1 in ABS Views on Content and Procedures.

Please answer, in as much detail as possible, the following questions.

QUESTION 1

Indicate whether this submission relates to:

a new topic;	go to question 2
change to an existing topic;	go to question 2
the deletion of a topic; or	go to question 4
some other aspect of the census.	go to question 11

QUESTION 2

Topic name.

QUESTION 3

Define the topic and/or describe modifications you are proposing for the 2001 Census as precisely as possible.

QUESTION 4

What topic(s) recommended to be included in the 2001 Census (see Chapter 6 of ABS Views) do you consider to be of low priority or for other reasons, should be excluded?

(This is a required item if proposing a new topic or collection of a topic from Chapters 7 and 8 of ABS Views on Content and Procedures).

QUESTION 5a

Provide details of the specific purposes for which the information from your proposed topic will be used. Please give details of:

- how specific studies or programs rely on this information; and
- uses in policy-making, long-term planning, social and economic applications.

Indicate as clearly as possible the benefits that flow from the data.

QUESTION 5b

What output from the census would be requested to support the uses you have described?

QUESTION 6	What classification changes (if any) are required for this particular topic? Please provide details of the categories required and appropriate ranges/descriptions for each category.
QUESTION 7	How, and with what other topic(s), will the information provided from the proposed topic be cross-classified?
QUESTION 8	At what geographical level (e.g. collection district, statistical local area, etc.) do you require this information to be tabulated? Please indicate the level of classification required at each geographical level. Note that in order to protect confidentiality, detailed classifications and large cross-tabulations will not be released for small areas.
QUESTION 9	Where information on this topic is available from other sources, indicate in what ways these sources are inadequate for your requirements. If necessary, please consult with your local ABS office on what data are available from other sources.
QUESTION 10	What would be the consequences for your organisation (or other users) if your submission is not accepted for the 2001 Census? In particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ What activities could not take place or would be significantly reduced or degraded in quality?■ Would any additional costs be incurred by your organisation to collect substitute data? If so, please indicate the type of collection envisaged and its cost.
QUESTION 11	Where appropriate please comment on aspects of the census other than the inclusion, modification or deletion of a topic.

APPENDIX 3

Population Surveys 1990–1997

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Absences from Work				*		*		*
Agricultural Finance								*
Aspects of Literacy +								*
Attendance at Selected Culture/Leisure Venues							*	
Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islanders in the Labour Force							*	
Career Experience					*			*
Characteristics of Migrants	*			*			*	
Characteristics of Small Business Owners								*
Childcare	*			*			*	
Child Immunisation and Health Screening							*	
Consumers and Non-Consumers of Culture/Leisure Industry Products		*						
Crime and Safety						*		*
Crime Victims					*			
Disability, Ageing and Carers +					*			
Educational Attainment		*	*	*	*	*		
Educational Attendance	*	*	*	*			*	*
Education and Training +					*			*
Employment and Unemployment Patterns +							*	*
Employment Benefits	*	*	*		*	*	*	*
Environmental Behaviour						*		
Environmental Issues				*			*	
Families in Australia +				*				
Family Characteristics								*
National Health and Nutrition Survey +						*	*	
Health Insurance	*		*					
Home Based Employment			*				*	
Home Production of Fruit and Vegetables			*					
Housing +						*		
Income and Housing +	*							
Infant Sleeping Positions				*				
Job Search Experience of Unemployed Persons	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Labour Force Experience	*	*	*	*	*	*		*
Labour Force Status	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Labour Mobility	*	*	*			*		*
Mental Health								*
Multiple Jobholders			*					*
Persons Not in the Labour Force	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Persons Retired from Full-Time Work				*		*		
Persons Who Have Left the Labour Force		*			*	*		*
Persons Who Intend to Retire From Full-Time Work				*				
Re-Entrants to the Labour Force	*			*		*		*
Rental Investors				*				*
Rental Tenants						*		*
Retirement Intentions						*		*
Small Businesses							*	
Successful and Unsuccessful Job Search Experience	*		*		*		*	
Superannuation		*		*		*		
Telephone Ownership / Connections	*							
Time Use +								*
Trade Union Membership	*		*		*		*	*
Transition from Education to Work	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Underemployed Workers		*			*	*	*	*
Voluntary Work							*	
Weekly Earnings of Employees	*	*	*	*	*	*		*
Women's Safety +								*
Working Arrangements					*		*	*
Work in Selected Culture/Leisure Activities					*			*

+ Special Supplementary Surveys.

APPENDIX 4

List of Census questions recommended by the United Nations

LIST OF PROPOSED TOPICS BY UNITED NATIONS FOR 2000 WORLD CENSUS

The United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD) has prepared advice to countries on population and housing censuses. This is included in the publication *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* (Series M No 67).

The list of possible topics is included here for readers to see the results of the accumulated experience of countries in the censuses of the last several decades. The topics included in the 1996 Australian Census of Population and Housing are shown in bold. Before getting to the list, the following paragraphs contain some relevant explanation from the UN publication.

The list of topics included in these global recommendations for population censuses are based on the global and regional census experience of the last several decades. The topics included here are, with minor revisions, the same as those included in the previous United Nations population census recommendations (i.e. Series M, No. 67 and No. 67/Add. 1), with the addition of a topic on disability.

It should be stressed that no country should attempt to cover all the topics included in the combined lists of topics.

Although the set of topics covered in these recommendations is quite comprehensive in terms of topics generally considered suitable for inclusion in a population census, it is also recognised that a few countries may find it necessary to include one or more additional topics of particular national or local interest. However, before the final decision is made to include any such additional topics their suitability should be carefully tested.

List of Population Census Topics

1. Geographical and internal migration characteristics

- (a) **Place of usual residence**
- (b) **Place where present at time of census**
- (c) **Place of birth** (Aust: country of birth)
- (d) Duration of residence
- (e) **Place of previous residence** (Aust: 1 year ago)
- (f) **Place of residence at a specified date in the past**
(Aust: 5 years ago)

2. Household and family characteristics

- (a) **Relationship to head or other reference member of household**

3. Demographic and social characteristics

- (a) **Sex**
- (b) **Age**
- (c) **Marital status**
- (d) **Citizenship**
- (e) **Religion**
- (f) **Language**
- (g) **National and/or ethnic group** (Aust: Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin)

4. Fertility and mortality

- (a) **Children ever born**
- (b) Children living
- (c) Date of birth of last child born alive
- (d) Deaths in the past 12 months
- (e) Maternal/paternal orphanhood
- (f) Age, date or duration of first marriage
- (g) Age of mother at first child born alive

5. Educational characteristics

- (a) **Literacy**
- (b) **School attendance**
- (c) **Educational attainment**
- (d) **Field of study and educational qualifications**

6. Economic characteristics

- (a) **Activity status** (Aust: labour force status)
- (b) **Time worked**
- (c) **Occupation**
- (d) **Industry**
- (e) **Status in employment**
- (f) **Income**
- (g) Institutional sector of employment
- (h) **Place of work**

7. International migration

- (a) **Country of birth**
- (b) **Citizenship**
- (c) **Year of arrival**

8. Disability

- (a) **Disability**
- (b) **Impairment and handicap**
- (c) **Causes of disability**

List of Housing Census Topics

Basic topics are those of general interest and value to countries or areas and also important in enabling comprehensive comparison of statistics at the international level. The basic list consists of the following 20 topics. These topics are listed below according to the unit of enumeration:

Unit of enumeration: building

1. **Building - type of**
2. Construction material of outer walls
3. Year or period of construction

Unit of enumeration: living quarters

4. **Location**
5. **Living quarters - type of**
6. **Occupancy status**
7. **Ownership - type of**
8. Rooms - number of
9. Floor space
10. Water supply system
11. Toilet facilities
12. Bathing facilities
13. Cooking facilities
14. Lighting - type of and/or electricity
15. Solid waste disposal
16. **Occupancy by one or more households**
17. **Occupants - number of**

Unit of enumeration: Households/Occupants of living quarters

18. **Demographic and economic characteristics of household head**
 - (a) **Age**
 - (b) **Sex**
 - (c) **Type of activity**
 - (d) **Occupation**

19. Tenure

20. Rental and owner-occupied housing costs

In addition to this list, there is a list of 15 topics defined as additional. They are represented in a number of national housing censuses.

Unit of enumeration: Building

1. Dwellings in the building - number of
2. Elevator - availability of
3. Farm building or not
4. Materials of which specific parts of building are constructed
5. State of repair

Unit of enumeration: Living quarters

6. **Bedrooms - number of**
7. Fuel used for cooking
8. Heating - type and energy used for
9. Hot water - availability of
10. Piped gas - availability of

11. Telephone - availability of
12. Use of housing unit

Unit of enumeration: Occupants

- 13. Cars available to the household - number of**
14. Durable consumer appliances available to the household
15. Outdoor space available for household use

APPENDIX 5

ABS CONTACT DETAILS

CONTACT OFFICER

Australian Bureau of Statistics Monica Byatt
SYDNEY Phone: (02) 9268 4155

Australian Bureau of Statistics Ms Soula Macfarlane
MELBOURNE Phone: (03) 9615 7080

Australian Bureau of Statistics Alex McNaughton
BRISBANE Phone: (07) 3222 6122

Australian Bureau of Statistics Mike Stratton
ADELAIDE Phone: (08) 8237 7414

Australian Bureau of Statistics Chris Spencer
PERTH Phone: (08) 9360 5237

Australian Bureau of Statistics Adam Czapracki
HOBART Phone: (03) 6222 5839

Australian Bureau of Statistics Peter White
DARWIN Phone: (08) 8943 2167

Australian Bureau of Statistics Tim Power
CANBERRA Phone: (02) 6207 0244

2001 CENSUS OF POPULATION AND HOUSING

BACKGROUND FOR SUBMISSIONS

INTRODUCTION

With the release of the publication *2001 Census of Population and Housing: ABS Views on Content and Procedures (Cat No. 2007.0)*, the ABS has invited users of census data and the public to comment on the views expressed in that publication. This document provides a background for people considering making submissions on topics and/or other issues concerning the 2001 Census.

Each submission for the inclusion/modification of topics requires detailed justification to facilitate ABS assessment against certain selection criteria specified below. Also, an indication is required as to which topics recommended for inclusion by the ABS should be excluded, so as to keep the cost of the census at the same level.

There is no need for a submission to be made to include a topic for which the ABS preliminary recommendation is to include, unless it is considered that the ABS assessment needs to be made more comprehensive.

If changes to topics included in the 1996 Census are considered to be required, details of the proposed changes are needed.

Submissions should be completed answering the list of questions set out at the back of this background paper. There is also a *Submission Guidelines and Authorisation* page on the front of this paper which should be detached and sent in to the ABS with the completed submission. It should be noted that a separate submission needs to be completed for each topic requested for inclusion/modification. Additional copies of the Background for Submissions paper are available from ABS offices.

2001 Census of Population and Housing: ABS Views on Content and Procedures (Cat. No. 2007.0), along with the Background for Submissions paper and the Submission Guidelines and Authorisation, will be available via the ABS Web site at <http://www.abs.gov.au>.

Interested organisations and persons who have comments to make on issues other than the inclusion/modification/deletion of a topic, are asked to answer question 11 at the back of this *Background for Submissions* paper.

Electronic submissions should be sent to census2001@abs.gov.au. A copy of the electronic form can be found at <http://www.abs.gov.au> or can be e-mailed on request.

Hardcopy submissions should be sent to:

Judy Aitkin
Population Census Development, W4Gb
Australian Bureau of Statistics
PO Box 10
BELCONNEN ACT 2616

or faxed to:

(02) 6252 7512

The closing date for submissions is Thursday, 30 April 1998.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

A self-enumeration approach is used in the census. That is, each householder, or one householder on behalf of other members of the household, is asked to answer the questions on the census form on its own behalf and with relatively little assistance from the census collector. This method imposes some constraints on the types of topics and questions that can be included in the census if the public are to provide high quality and accurate information. There is also a need to limit the total number of questions asked in order to keep respondent load to an acceptable level and to ensure high levels of cooperation. Combined with this, is the need to ensure that the large census operation is conducted as efficiently and effectively as possible.

These constraints are reflected in the criteria used to assess topics for inclusion in the census. The assessment criteria are whether:

- 1 the topic is of major national importance;
- 2 there is a need for data on the topic for small groups in the population or for small geographic areas; and
- 3 the topic is suitable for inclusion in the census.

Whether the topic is of major national importance

The census is a large and costly operation and it imposes a load on the householders who are required to answer the questions. It is absolutely essential that every question asked has a specific purpose and that the purpose is of major national importance. Submissions proposing the inclusion of new topics should clearly indicate the value of the information by showing the uses to which it will be put. Submissions should also spell out the specific consequences if the topic is not included in the census.

Whether the census is an appropriate method

The census is appropriate for topics for which users require:

- detailed information for a large number of small geographic areas;
- information about small groups in the population that cannot be identified through other means (e.g. administrative records); and
- cross-classification with other characteristics collected in the census.

Information required for broad geographic areas (e.g. at the state or national level) may be better obtained by other means (e.g. sample surveys) depending on the detail of the cross-classification required. If the need is restricted to information about a few specific small areas, other methods could be more appropriate.

Consideration should be given to whether data are available from other sources. Similar or surrogate data may be collected by another organisation, there may have been surveys already conducted or planned to be conducted by the ABS, or from some form of administrative records.

The ABS produces an extensive range of information from economic censuses and surveys, administrative sources, and a comprehensive program of population surveys. While the ABS population surveys are not able to collect the detailed information that can be obtained from the census for small groups or small areas, there are general advantages associated with interviewers collecting the data rather than the self-enumeration method used in the census, and also in terms of timeliness of data availability.

The census cannot provide:

- up-to-date information - it normally takes about 11 months before census results start to become generally available; and
- information about identified persons - the ABS collects data under the authority of the *Census and Statistics Act 1905* which precludes the release of data in any form which is likely to enable the identification of a particular person or organisation.

Is the topic is suitable for inclusion in the census?

The self-enumeration method used in the census requires that questions asked be readily understood by all householders.

In general, census topics should not:

- cause an adverse reaction from people by invading their personal privacy to an unacceptable degree - including topics of this nature will produce poor quality data for the questions concerned and may also affect responses to other questions;

- need more than one or two questions to obtain the required information - such topics impose an excessive burden on respondents and occupy space which could be used for other topics;
- require an overlong explanation or instruction to ensure an accurate answer - research has shown that people often do not read such instructions;
- seek information not generally known such as 'Where was your maternal grandmother born?' - data collected from such a question would not be reliable;
- ask things which people are unlikely to accurately remember - for example: 'Did your family take a holiday lasting at least seven days, five years ago... one year ago... ?';
- seek opinions or attitudes; or
- present major coding problems or need extensive processing.

What happens next

ABS will be holding seminars in each capital city during April 1998 to explain the consultation process and facilitate understanding of the requirements for justifying inclusion of topics in the Census. The seminars will also provide opportunities for people to present arguments about topics or other census issues that concern them.

Following assessment of submissions, final recommendations on the nature and content of the 2001 Census will be discussed with the Australian Statistics Advisory Council (ASAC) around July 1998. People who have provided submissions will be advised of the outcome of these discussions. The ABS will then make a submission to the Government, including recommendations on the nature and content of the 2001 Census. A government decision about the content of the 2001 Census is expected to be known by the end of 1999.

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State Government users considering putting in a proposal for a survey to be conducted should forward their submissions through the relevant statistical co-ordinating body, or, in the case of NSW, through the ABS Regional Office.

QUESTIONS

HOW TO COMPLETE A SUBMISSION FORM:

A separate submission is required for each topic.

Remember:

- a new topic MUST be of major national importance;
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- a new question MUST ask for information which people CAN and are WILLING to provide.

For more detail about making a submission please read the Guidelines for Submissions attached to this form or Appendix 1 in ABS Views on Content and Procedures.

Please answer, in as much detail as possible, the following questions.

QUESTION 1

Indicate whether this submission relates to:

a new topic;	go to question 2
change to an existing topic;	go to question 2
the deletion of a topic; or	go to question 4
some other aspect of the census.	go to question 11

QUESTION 2

Topic name.

QUESTION 3

Define the topic and/or describe modifications you are proposing for the 2001 Census as precisely as possible.

QUESTION 4

What topic(s) recommended to be included in the 2001 Census (see Chapter 6 of ABS Views) do you consider to be of low priority or for other reasons, should be excluded?

(This is a required item if proposing a new topic or collection of a topic from Chapters 7 and 8 of ABS Views on Content and Procedures).

QUESTION 5a

Provide details of the specific purposes for which the information from your proposed topic will be used. Please give details of:

- how specific studies or programs rely on this information; and
- uses in policy-making, long-term planning, social and economic applications.

Indicate as clearly as possible the benefits that flow from the data.

QUESTION 5b

What output from the census would be requested to support the uses you have described?

QUESTION 6

What classification changes (if any) are required for this particular topic?

Please provide details of the categories required and appropriate ranges/descriptions for each category.

QUESTION 7

How, and with what other topic(s), will the information provided from the proposed topic be cross-classified?

QUESTION 8

At what geographical level (e.g. collection district, statistical local area, etc.) do you require this information to be tabulated?

Please indicate the level of classification required at each geographical level. Note that in order to protect confidentiality, detailed classifications and large cross-tabulations will not be released for small areas.

QUESTION 9

Where information on this topic is available from other sources, indicate in what ways these sources are inadequate for your requirements.

If necessary, please consult with your local ABS office on what data are available from other sources.

QUESTION 10

What would be the consequences for your organisation (or other users) if your submission is not accepted for the 2001 Census?

In particular:

- What activities could not take place or would be significantly reduced or degraded in quality?
- Would any additional costs be incurred by your organisation to collect substitute data? If so, please indicate the type of collection envisaged and its cost.

QUESTION 11

Where appropriate please comment on aspects of the census other than the inclusion, modification or deletion of a topic.